

THE
GIPSY COUNTESS:
A
NOVEL.

BY MISS GUNNING.

IN FOUR VOLUMES.

VOL. IV.

London:

PRINTED FOR T. N. LONGMAN AND O. REES,
PATERNOSTER ROW.

1799.

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1850



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LETTER XLVII.

IN CONTINUATION.

“**F**ORBID it Heaven!” exclaimed Charles, and he would have rushed out of the room. Never, ah! never was despair so strongly painted as on his countenance, when partly by persuasion, partly by force, I prevailed on him to return: he wept like an infant, and my tears flowed from sympathy.

VOL. IV.

B

A silence

A silence of several moments ensued; he laid his feverish cheek on my shoulder, and my arm supported him.

Recovering the powers of articulation, I said to him—"How have you deceived me! or rather, how have I deceived myself?—You do not love Julia—you will not be the husband of Julia!"

"Never!—Yet, witness Earth and Heaven, there is not a created being on whom my ardent soul so fondly doats as upon Julia!"

"And what if her heart is as fondly attached to you as your's to her?"

"It would be the bitterest of my sorrows!"

Every word he uttered more and more confounded me; in compassion to my brother,



ther, I yielded up the secret of my uncle to the guardianship of his prudence, and, in the midst of all his inconsistencies, I could not but flatter myself with the hope of tranquillizing his disturbed spirits, by the eagerness of attention with which he listened to the projects of Lord Offington to unite his fate with that of the lovely Julia; but when he lifted up his eyes, which I expected to have seen pregnant with joy, what was my disappointment to behold them fixed on my face, fraught with additional sadness, and to hear him utter under a sigh of agony—

“ Oh! how hard is my trial!—How glorious will be my victory !”

“ Mysterious, unkind brother! why,” said I, “ will you not let me extract the poisoned dart of concealment which rankles in your heart, and must eventually undermine your constitution ?”

B 2

“ Because

“ Because I dare not suffer even your gentle hand to approach it—Deep, deep is the wound, and never can the arrow be extracted !”

“ Then you are determined on self-destruction !”

“ On the contrary, I resolve to war with my treacherous feelings till I have vanquished them.”

“ Oh ! Charles, they have already mastered your strength, and left you only the shadow of your former self.”

“ Shall I repeat to you that they have no part in what you fancy my present indisposition ; and if,” added he, with a forced smile, “ I am not quite so well as usual, it is not the fault of Julia, but the wages of my own dissipation.”

“ And

“And will you, indeed, reject the hand of Julia when Lord Ossington shall court you to accept it?”

“Were I to seize the blessing, I should embrace my bane!”

“Shall I declare this determination to my uncle?—I would rather offend him by confessing my disobedience to his commands, than see you thus torn by apprehensions—thus miserable by anticipation!”

He paused, blushed, hesitated, then said, tenderly pressing my hand to his bosom, “My generous sister, why can I not be more grateful for your kindness!—If my heart could be divided, you would share it with Julia; it is her image that presides there, and though not herself in possession of its torturing secret, yet to no other will honour permit me to disclose it. Take

care that you do not again tell me I am beloved by Julia!—Thank God, she has never given me reason to suppose her affection for me exceeded your own; every thing else would I bear, *that* I could not bear!”

The groan which forced a passage from his tortured bosom entered my soul, and, without waiting for his permission, I flew to the breakfast-room, where I knew by this time the family were assembled.

In passing the door of Julia, I opened it softly, to see if she had yet left her chamber, when, more in conformity to my wishes than my expectation, I found her still there, and so little advanced in her toilet preparations, that, at least, the next quarter of an hour would be my own before she could possibly make her appearance.

“How

"How is dear Charles?" she cried, the moment she saw me, "don't you think he looks very ill?"

"Not quite so well as he used to do," I replied, fearing to alarm her, "and he says he is better this morning."

"Thank God!" she exclaimed, "I am sure he has kept me waking all night, so tell him; if I am chid for my late hours, it is *he* and not I that deserve reprehension."

I turned away from the dear pathetic girl, whom I supposed to be on the point of partaking with her lover the misery of a disappointed passion, and proceeded to my mother's dressing-room.

CONTINUATION.

I found, as I hoped to do, that Lord Offington and my parents had met at the breakfast table, but not with the same cheerful countenances which used to distinguish them at all our domestic parties; they had been talking to each other of the alteration so perceptible in the person of Charles, and my dear mother was still in tears, which she tried to smother, when the door opened, thinking it might be himself who was entering.

The expectation that Julia would appear before I had made my interesting communication, occasioned me to introduce it with as much tender caution to these beloved relations as might serve neither to very greatly surprize or distress them, yet
without

without that sort of manœuvring ceremony with which time is generally loaded, as well as retarded, on the disclosure of unpleasant events.

I said I had been shut up with Charles in his apartment, and believed I had discovered the source of that change in his looks which we all must have observed and lamented.

When desired, with doubtful impatience to proceed, I applied to my uncle for pardon, should I have transgressed his commands, in my eagerness to scrutinize the heart of my distempered brother, in order to make a cure of his malady.

“Rosanna,” replied Lord Offington, with frightful gravity, “to accomplish so good a purpose, I can forgive every thing but—”

B 5

“Oh

“ Oh, my Lord,” I replied, interrupting him, “ do not put any limits to your graciousness, your displeasure would kill me; yet, to save the life of so dear a brother, I think I could not refuse to die.”

“ I see what you have done,” cried he, rising angrily, and walking about the room, “ you may talk on to those who will hear you, but I forbid you to expect my attention.”

Notwithstanding this implied neglect of the subject on which I was about to enter, I well knew that every syllable of the information I brought would find its way through his ear to his heart, which made me careful not to omit a word, look, or action, that might move him to compassion for poor Charles's situation, and obtain the reprieve for which I laboured, foreseeing that if his union with Julia was persisted in, the end to him must be fatal.

Still

Still my uncle spoke not, but as he measured his steps up and down, they became more hasty and disturbed; at length he rushed out of the room, and we heard him ascending the stair-case.

I had no doubt he was gone to my brother's chamber, and that he would speak peace to his wounded spirit.

I guessed right; he was gone about ten minutes, and came back but a very short time before the entrance of your sister; his Lordship was accompanied by Charles, but so changed, so reversed from what I had left him, that my heart exulted with joy, and I congratulated myself on the stratagem by which I had restored him to tranquillity.

He was not only tranquil, but gay; my father shook him affectionately by the hand; my mother's eyes sparkled with delight

light as she pressed him in her arms, whilst both looked their thanks to Lord Offington, who, so far from seeming to claim any merit on account of the favourable change in their darling son, pretended to have himself been seized with a sudden fit of the vapours, which he was obliged to Charles, he said, for having dissipated.

I longed to know what had passed in their short interview, yet, on the subject nearest to all our thoughts not a word was uttered which could relieve our curiosity; but my brother no longer appeared unhappy, and I soon forgot to be anxious.

I had scarcely an opportunity of examining my uncle's countenance, where I was certain to read whether in reality he was angry at my breach of confidence; I only caught his eyes once; they were full of kindness, and I thought too of approbation.

My

My brother was with energy endeavouring to convince us the cold he had taken in riding through the rain after dancing had *almost* forsaken, and would soon *entirely* leave him, when Julia's presence put all his composure to flight; he blushed, turned pale, and I expected would have fallen from his chair, when, in the sweetest and most affectionate accents, holding out her lovely white hand, from which he at first shrunk back, but afterwards ventured to touch, she said—

CONTINUATION.

“Rosanna has not deceived me; she said you were better—Dear Charles, are you indeed better?”

He faltered in his reply, but instantly recovering from his confusion, stepped across the room with a firm step, procured
her

her a chair, and placed it by the side of his own.

So much were we all occupied in observing the words and motions of two beings the most endeared to our hearts, the most interesting to our senses, that we seemed to forget there was in existence any object but themselves ; we neither thought upon, looked at, or spoke to each other.

“ I heard you declare,” said Julia, “ as I came into the room, that you had been acting a very unwise part by yourself, and a very *cruel* one by your friends.”

“ Of what do my friends accuse me ?” he asked, his whole face masked in scarlet.

“ Oh, you think it no crime, I suppose, to yourself or us running about after fiddles and dancing ladies, then riding through tremendous water spouts, getting wet, getting

ting cold, and playing all manner of tricks with your constitution, as if nobody was concerned in its preservation."

Now, thought I, what will become of him; but how great was my surprize, when, instead of betraying the confusion I expected, he assumed a tone of unembarrassed raillery, and replied—

"It is not all men who commit those sort of follies that have so much to urge in defence of their conduct, as, if called upon, I could certainly produce for mine.

"Will you not command this boaster, Madam," cried Julia, addressing my mother, "to declare what magic induced him to put his own life and all our happiness to the risk?"

"Whatever," she replied, "is my authority to command, on the present occasion,

sion, I delegate to you, my love ; perhaps his confessions will be more candid, more unreserved to you, than he would make them to his mother."

" Then," continued the unconscious Julia, " I do call upon him to account, and, if possible, rationally account for the little care he has taken of himself."

" Refer me to sophistry, if you please ; I have nothing to do with rationality ; reason and passion are seldom such strict associates as to become responsible for each other."

He arose, and placed himself behind the back of her chair, in a well contrived position, to avoid her looks, which, I could not but observe, appeared confused as he answered her challenge to confession ; nor was I the only spectator who attributed Julia's blushes to tenderer sentiments than

we

we now thought would conduce to her future happiness.

“ Here am I,” said Charles, with an air and in a tone of gaiety which might have imposed on any body less informed of his real sentiments than myself, “ here am I, Julia, not my own accuser, but ready to answer any leading questions your sagacity may propose ; on you the office of my Judge devolves by authority ; it is enough for me if I am able to defend the charges which have been brought against my prudence, my self-neglect, and inconsideration for the peace of those dear friends who are so good as to be interested in my welfare.”

She smilingly turned her face half round—he suddenly averted his another away. “ I am afraid,” said she, “ of encountering in argument with so learned an opponent, who would meet me with weapons I do not understand ; sophistry has made no
part

part of my studies. Now you must know, Charles, I would only ask, in the name of common sense, to what *good* motive you ascribe that negligence of your own safety with which we have all so much cause to upbraid you?"

"To love, to a beautiful woman, to a susceptible heart," he undauntedly replied, "I danced with an angel, and I forgot that I myself was mortal. When I mounted to return to College, it might have rained or it might have shone, wrapped up in the charms of my partner, I should have been equally unconscious of either; it was my fate to be drenched rather than scorched. So now you have got the whole tremendous history of my alledged imprudence."

I have always understood that love and jealousy are twin sisters, seldom or ever to be met with asunder; I know too that nothing hurts a female mind seriously attached

ed

ed half so sorely, as to hear those praises which have been selfishly appropriated bestowed upon another; and as my brother spoke, I looked at Julia, expecting to have seen the ensign of jealousy hoisted on her brilliant countenance, but saw there neither pain or mortification; her features were as little impressed with chagrin as her accents marked by gravity, when she rallied him on the loss of his heart, and, joining her lovely hands together, entreated that *Papa*, *Mama*, and *Uncle*, would give consent for dear Charles to convert the partner of his dance into a partner for his life.

The *nonbalance* with which she made her petition acted on the spirits of Charles with the force of mental electricity, for which I was able to account, knowing as I did in what horror he held the idea of her entertaining any thing like attachment towards himself.

Thus

Thus the accurate dimensions by which I had measured the length and breadth of his mysterious feelings for our adopted sister, had prepared me to expect no common sort of answer ; I therefore, unmoved by surprize, beheld his eyes sparkle with joy, his face glow with exultation, and heard him exclaim in paroxysm of fervour—

CONTINUATION.

“ Julia, you are in the right—If ever I *do* marry, the partner with whom I danced at Henley shall be my partner *for life!*”

Sure this declaration, thought I, must disenchant the dear girl, if any secret partiality lurks beneath her assumed indifference.

The language of my imagination was reflected by sympathy on all the revered and
deeply.

deeply interested countenances of the anxious surrounding auditors ; they as well as I knew how to construe his professions, not into what they appeared to signify, but what they did really mean, and it was thus we rendered them—*Julia, I cannot be thine, and never will I be the husband of another.*

So much were we overpowered by those internal tortures with which he struggled, from whatever hidden source they may have derived their pungency, that no lips divided to interrupt the conversation, still supported by the young people with seeming pleasantry ; on the part of Julia, all was real ; on that of Charles, fiction, agonizing fiction !

Lord Ossington, fearing the emotions of his soul might be too much for his bodily weakness, broke up the party, and under pretence of shewing his nephew some improvements, dragged him into the garden.

Of

Of whatever nature were the private and very frequent conferences which from this time my uncle held with Charles, we were obliged to content ourselves with contemplating the good effects they evidently produced, both on his spirits and health; we thought the cure performed, but by what miraculous means, of ourselves we were unable to discover, while from Lord Osfington it was in vain to expect information; he had declared himself the confidant of his heart's closest secret, but that he must have his nephew's consent to do so before he should repose it in the keeping of any third person.

Julia, who never once suspected herself in the remotest degree to be an object of peculiar interest in the affections of my brother, often, by her zeal to forward his recovery, displayed such active, such ardent, such tender assiduities, that the very means she used to promote his cure had
well

well nigh proved the bane of his own exertions.

This danger was perceived before it had overtaken us; the watchful guardian over his dawning tranquillity soon discovered that Julia's unstudied attentions would act upon the mind of his charge like an accommodating unskilful physician, who, neglecting the malady, administers only to the appetite of his patient.

Lord Offington was no sooner confirmed in the truth of this opinion, than, by various devices, he contrived, in a great measure, to separate those persons whom he had once so fervently desired to unite.

Instead of allowing them to meet at breakfast, he would always find some pretence or another for breakfasting alone with Charles, either before or after the family hours of assembling; sometimes he would
walk,

walk, sometimes ride with him, during the whole morning, taking care that he should never enter the drawing-room till that chair was filled which he used to occupy by the side of Julia; and not seldom, when necessity brought them together, did his amiable favourite encounter short pettish reproofs for the officiousness of her endeavours to entertain the poor convalescent.

If she asked my uncle, “might Charles play at chess?”—“By no means, it was too sedentary.” Should she give him one of his favourite airs on her harp?—No, the noise must distract his head. Would it do him any harm to take a few turns at battledore and shuttlecock?—Yes, certainly, what good could be expected from such inflammatory exercise?

Thus did Lord Offington, when he could not keep them entirely asunder, prevent as much as possible every opportunity
they

they might find of conversing together, as if he feared the very sound of Julia's voice might transfuse new poison to the already infected soul of his struggling patient.

Hours, days, and weeks, which would have otherwise passed away in family amusements, were now by my uncle devoted to create frequent disunions between two of its best beloved members; he would walk, ride, fish, or hunt, with Charles by his side, from morning to night; take him to dine at any other house rather than return to his own; in short, by degrees these absences became longer, until we ceased to be alarmed or surprized when we did not see them for whole days together.

We beheld at every renewed interview, and with joy undescribable, the great utility of his Lordship's system; to his being the best of physicians as well as the tenderest of nurses, the countenance of Charles

bore ample testimony; besides, he could now look at, speak to, meet with, or part from Julia, unaffailed by those agonies of suppressed passion so conspicuous to all, her own unconscious self excepted, who bore witness to his frequent internal conflicts.

CONTINUATION.

Edward being so soon expected, was no longer kept secret from any part of the family, after Lord Ossington had once made an interest in the confidence of Charles.

They were but just returned from an excursion to Colt Hill, where, in a fortnight, our dear invalid had apparently recovered from all his disorders, mental and corporeal, when the arrival of another equally dear brother was hastily announced by one
of

of the servants who had caught a glimpse of his carriage coming down the avenue.

Whether from the abruptness with which this intelligence was conveyed, or from what other cause we had not then time to consider, but a visible change took place in the countenance of Charles and Julia; on his a death-like paleness overspread itself; on her's, the deepest crimson; yet though the vital stream descended from the one, and ascended to the other, there seemed a similitude in their feelings, and these feelings appeared much nearer allied to distress than happiness.

In the speed with which I followed the steps of my transported parents, who flew to embrace the newly arrived stranger, I did not observe that we were unaccompanied either by my uncle, Charles, or Julia; on the contrary, I had supposed their impatience equalled my own; and it was not

till the emotions of a meeting so joyful were a little subsided that I recollected neither of them had been present.

The idea that something very particular must have detained them carried me back to the apartment, where I had left them, whilst Edward, with my father hanging on one arm, my mother on the other, walked slowly after, frequently stopping to answer their fond questions, and to gaze with rapture on their benign faces; this tardiness of motion enabled me to precede them by a few moments,

The spectacle which met my eye was foreign to any which had entered into my imagination; Charles had fallen at the feet of Julia, whose head reclined on the chair, and whose cheeks were suffused with tears, whilst his were concealed in her robe, and groans issued from his bosom.

I looked

I looked at them, then at my uncle; and if my soul spoke at my eyes, it was capable of saying much more than my tongue could have uttered, for surprize had struck me speechless.

I ran towards Julia, who, by a sudden exertion of strength, disengaged herself from the grasp of my brother, and threw herself into my arms, exclaiming, "Ah! Rosanna, I am undone! the secret of my heart is discovered, and I am undone!"

Lord Ossington, whose undivided attention was engrossed by the deplorable situation of his nephew, bid me repress my curiosity.

"Charles," said he, "is a greater fool than I thought him!—the secret which I have guarded so many weeks, he in one moment of weakness has betrayed!—Take Julia with you; comfort, console her, but

let her return no more hither till she is able to meet Edward, without destroying Charles Dunstenville."

I did not wait to have this extraordinary command repeated, but hurried Julia out of the room, and led her to my own apartment.

It was here that your amiable sister, Mr. St. Clear, with that candour and frankness so peculiar to her nature, lamented her predilection for my elder brother, which, almost unknown to herself, she confessed to have cherished from her infancy, but still more bitterly the fatal attachment entertained for her by my younger brother.

"Oh!" cried she, "I shall never forgive myself for being the innocent cause of his misery!"—She wrung her hands, and wept unceasingly.

I forced

I forced her to wipe away her tears, promised to attend her when she retired for the night, and hear the little history of her heart. Thus having brought her to something like serenity before we could have been missed, I re-conducted her to the party.

I was pleased to observe an air of tranquillity reigning throughout the whole domestic circle, although I very much feared the re-entrance of Julia would totally derange that change which had been so happily effected, nor was I much mistaken; Julia trembled exceedingly, changed colour more than once, and Charles hastily darted out of the room as Edward advanced, not without his share of confusion, to embrace with tender gallantry the idol of his affections.

Ignorant of their sentiments for each other, a sort of delicate restraint pervaded their words, their looks, their actions, so

that on the return of Charles he saw nothing to aggravate the torture of those feelings under which all his long collecting fortitude had given way; and for the remainder of that evening, the cheerfulness he exerted very much contributed to encrease the general felicity.

My uncle who sat watching with anxiety the turns of his countenance, tacitly acknowledged how much he was satisfied, by encouraging smiles, significant glances, now and then expressing by words his approbation of every sentence which fell from him unincumbered by sighs, and unburdened by melancholy.

When I retired with Julia, all her stifled emotions broke out with redoubled force. I did not leave her to indulge her sorrows alone, but spent the night in her chamber; it was a sleepless one to both, I being as eager to hear as she to relate the interesting narrative

narrative of what had been passing in her heart preceding and subsequent to the departure of my brother to the continent.

“Dear Rosanna,” said she, “you ought, instead of soothing me, to hate that presumption which has made me lift up my eyes to the heir of my benefactors; to despise that pusillanimity by which I have so long been withheld from laying my whole soul open to your inspection; above all, I should be the object of your abhorrence for——”

“Stop!” cried I, interrupting her, “do not think I shall quarrel with you for any of those ingeniously alledged misdemeanors, because, in the first place, I am convinced, my dear, that love, rather than ambition, led you to bestow your valuable heart on Edward. Secondly, I acquit you of presumption, because both birth and education authorize your pretensions. Thirdly,

I am willing to overlook your want of confidence in my friendship, on condition that you never repeat the offence."

"Never! never!" she replied. "But—but—" hesitating, "is it possible you can, with all your goodness, forgive the unfortunate creature who has brought misery into a family, which, unless for her intrusion into it, would have known nothing but happiness?"

"Condemn not yourself," said I, "where Nature is only to blame; if she had bestowed her favours more scantily, our dear Charles, in you at least, would not have become the idolater of her works. Yet tell me, Julia, how long have you suspected that his happiness had fallen a martyr to his sensibility?"

CONTINUATION.

Another packet from the fair hand of your sister has detained me from your service longer than I intended; the contents are of such a nature, that I enclose them with peculiar satisfaction.

She commands me to be diligent in forwarding our dispatches general; I must, therefore, give myself no more holidays till I have compleated the task she has assigned me.

The night I passed in Julia's chamber, having no part of it dedicated to repose, would have appeared long and fatiguing, but for the interest with which every moment of it was filled, by a display of the beautiful images contained in the volume of her heart—designed by Virtue, drawn

by Truth, and engraven by Magnanimity.

Whilst making confession of the tender sentiments so early imbibed for the too fascinating Edward, she lamented, with fast flowing tears, the predilection Charles had entertained for herself.

“On both occasions,” said she, “I am inexcusable; I gave my affections to him who never demanded them, and to him who would have purchased them with his life I must be ungrateful.”

I repeated my question of—How long she might have discovered that fatal partiality, which, so far from being a mystery to ourselves, served in reality for the foundation whereon Lord Offington had built his superstructural plans of an union, which, dear good man, he flattered himself would compleat the felicity of both?

“Alas!”

“Alas!” she replied, “I knew, I suspected nothing!—I loved Charles for his own sake—I loved him as a sister, and I loved him the better because he was the brother of Edward!—Would to God I had sooner penetrated into his inclinations—Oh! what mischief might then have been avoided!”

“How avoided?” said I; “could you have reasoned him out of his passion? or, what is still more difficult, would you have sacrificed your own?”

“Yes,” cried Julia, with energy, which left no room to doubt the sincerity of her assertion, “yes, I would either have conquered or banished myself from his sight for ever!—Even now it may not be too late—let me depend on your secrecy, who alone are acquainted with my weakness, and I will exert all my resolution, rather than by my means misery shall be entailed
on

on the family to whom I am indebted for more than existence !”

I looked on her with astonishment.—“Would you then,” said I, “renounce the sweet, long-cherished hope of being happy with Edward to save the life of Charles ?”

“Suppose it so,” she replied, “where would be the merit of such a sacrifice ?—Were I in making it to injure the feelings of another, I should hesitate—were I to break vows which it would be my duty to hold sacred, I should do more than hesitate, I should be firm to preserve them ; but now the case is different, very different. Of my too daring presumption, Mr. Dunstenville (whom I must no longer trust myself to name by the endearing appellation of Edward) is most fortunately ignorant ; I therefore do his feelings no wrong, I break no promise, I wound only my own heart ;
and

and shall not those wounds soon be healed by the approbation of my patrons, by the joy of seeing poor Charles restored to cheerfulness by your sisterly affection, and by the applause of my own conscience?"

"But," returned I, "Charles will never accept that hand which you would so generously offer him; he loves you to distraction, and yet he refuses to become your husband—he has declared this to my uncle, he has declared it to myself."

"Rosanna, he has then deceived you; he has also deceived Lord Offington, or why, on hearing his brother was at the door, why, when he saw me incapable of moving from my chair, to do as you did, to fly with eager haste, that I might have carried him the welcome with which my soul bounded; why did Charles then cast himself at my feet, why exclaim, *Julia!*
adorable

*adorable Julia! these emotions speak too much!—Edward is fortunate, most fortunate—I am wretched, most wretched!—Love him ever thus, and forget, I conjure you, that to secure his felicity, I renounce my own.”—*Your re-entrance, dear Rosanna, rescued me from a scene which had equally shocked my heart and my senses; you saw how awkwardly I supported my first interview with Mr. Edward Dunstenville; *he* felt none of those emotions by which I was agitated; you shall also witness that I can sometimes master those refractory sensations which would then have betrayed me!”

I listened, I admired; I would have persuaded, but her resolution was taken, nor did any thing suffice to calm the conflicts she endured between inclination and compassion, until I had engaged to perform the part of second in all her undertakings,
however

however high-flown or romantic they may appear in the sight of those whose sentiments were less exalted than her own.

When we joined the breakfast party, Julia, with a self-command, of which, when the trial approached, I had hardly supposed her capable, received and returned the compliments of Edward in a manner so kind, yet so unembarrassed; so easy, yet so little assiduous to engross his notice, that I believed myself the only person present who could guess at the real situation of her heart.

That of my brother's spoke at his eyes, in language impressive both of truth and tenderness; her's answered them not; he would have placed her by his side, but she slid by him, and sat down by Charles, whilst, with a smile, which served to cover more anguish than it was intended to display

play gaiety, she said, "Excuse me, Sir, till you are less a stranger at home, I do not desert an old friend for a new acquaintance.

Edward, instead of replying to her forced raillery, directed a look fraught with mysterious meaning, which being designed for Charles, by him only could be understood, and that he did understand it, the colour which it raised on his glowing cheeks bore ample testimony.

Soon after breakfast we all dispersed; my brothers walked out together; Julia went to air with my mother; my father, as foreman of the grand jury at —, set out to meet the Judges on their first arrival, and my uncle summoned me to attend him in his closet.

CONTINUATION.

It was now, for the first time in my life, that I saw Lord Offington's naturally sweet and affectionate disposition divested of all singularities, and I grieved to see it clouded with sadness.

"My dear niece," said he, "you must have discovered the misfortune which my errors in judgment are likely to bring on your brothers, and in which, of necessity, we must all be involved!"

As he spoke thus, he sighed deeply, and a tear fell down his cheek.

"Until yesterday," he continued, "I had supposed Charles to have gained some advantage over the enemy of his repose; he thought so himself, but we have both
been

been woefully deceived!—You must have seen the truth of my observation, when you last night surprized him at the feet of Julia. I have since calmed his spirits, but shall never effect his cure.”

I was penetrated by the energy of his expression; the melancholy of his looks, the tone of his voice, confirmed the sympathy his sorrows had awakened, and I strove to render them less pungent, by relating the whole of my last private conversation with Julia.

“ Julia,” he replied, “ is noble, frank, generous, dear to me as yourself or your brothers; she is mine by adoption, and shall I be less the guardian of *her* happiness than of your’s or theirs?—Their love for Julia I know; but since she would sacrifice her own peace to establish that of my family, my stability shall be the prop of her falling fortitude—No, Rosanna, whilst
I applaud

I applaud the motive, I condemn the action; a woman's heart and hand ought on no consideration ever to be separated."

I pleaded the exertion of which I knew Julia to be capable on an emergency like this; I said I was certain she would omit no efforts to transfer her affections from one brother to another. I would have proposed things more impossible to calm his uneasiness, if any such existed, and had then presented themselves to my imagination.

"You are too sanguine, my dear," replied Lord Offington, smiling incredulously, "that is a point on which our opinions can never associate; but for a moment take it in your own way; let us suppose the female heart formed of such elastic matter, as, without being lacerated by its first possessor, so readily to change its situation, yet the difficulty is by no means removed; for though Julia herself were to
announce

announce the revolution in her sentiments, Charles would still persist in rejecting the hand thus tendered."

"You are certain then, my dear Lord, that if happiness were within his reach, he would refuse to be happy?"

"He would refuse to be a scoundrel on any terms."

"A scoundrel!" I repeated, and my whole frame shuddered.

"Dear child, you are too easily alarmed," said his Lordship, "that word which fills you with so much terror, is not my word, but his own; I am the echo, not the accuser of Charles; he has in my presence bestowed it on himself, should he ever contend with Edward for the affections of Julia."

I expressed

I expressed my admiration of such a sacrifice made at the altar of fraternal love, but my uncle stopped me, by saying,

“ Can you surmise no other source except in Nature, from whence may have sprung this resignation to his own fate, this submission to the inclinations of his brother ?”

On the contrary, I declared my inability to combine with the ties of blood any secondary cause for the generous resignation of Charles in favour of Edward.

“ It is,” said he, “ that cause, that hidden cause which I am going to reveal ; young as you are, I dare to repose my own confidence, and the secret of our dear Charles, in your keeping ; you will never, any more than myself, let it escape, to disturb the repose of your parents, or lessen in
their

their esteem a rash, but penitent son, who, for one moment of impetuous passion, had fettered his otherwise noble mind with the perpetual chain of ever galling remorse."

Guess, if it be possible, Mr. St. Clear, what were my indescribable horrors at the closing of this solemn address, this implication of crime, attached to a brother so apparently amiable, so decidedly beloved!—I caught the hand of my uncle, and pressing it with the grasp of agony, besought him not to hold me in suspense; and he had the goodness to compassionate, as well as relieve my anxiety. The evening is too far advanced for me to enter on the interesting recital; to-morrow will be a more seasonable time for its commencement.

CONTINUATION.

To-morrow is arrived, nor have I passed the intermediate hours, from the laying down my pen to the taking it up again, wholly inactive; my thoughts have been busy in journeying over space and time, to bring back every eloper which had before escaped from the confines of memory; my very dreams have been aiding to the refreshment of its faculties. I have once more gone through the same scene in vision which I am about to give you in reality.

Lord Offington, during the former part of the conversation, had traversed the room with his eyes turned on the floor, except when suddenly stopping he lifted them up to fix them on my face, as if to read my heart, doubting, as it were, whether it

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would

would not want fortitude to bear with composure such as could alone secure my unentangled attention, the subject then hovering on his lips.

“I will not keep you longer in suspense,” said my kind uncle, in answer to the urgency of my entreaties, and, without quitting the hand that had seized upon his, he sat down by my side. Oh! what a tale did he then unfold!—But take it, Sir, in his own words—

“You, my Rosanna, who love both your brothers with equal fondness, cannot be partially inclined to either; therefore, though it has never been pointed out to your observation, you must certainly have often found occasion to remark, that, however similar their virtues, however praiseworthy their dispositions, yet in their tempers there is a glaring disparity.

“Edward,”

“Edward,” he continued, “is mild, unoffending; not easily provoked nor difficult to pardon; the strength of his reason is superior to that of his passions; yet the latter, in submitting to the government of the former, loses no particle of that free and graceful energy which distinguishes the man of feeling from the pupil of apathy.—Charles is only seduced into habits of gentleness from example, from education; the very turn of his eyes tell you, that by nature and constitution he is of a rash rather than an accommodating spirit. *His* reason also is strong, but the impetuosity of his passions still stronger, and between both he enjoys no self-possession.”

Hitherto I never had permitted my well-satisfied affection to analyze every particular feature which formed the character of my youngest brother, but now that they were so strikingly exhibited to my view, by the most faithful and impartial of all

painters, I could not help tacitly confessing the likeness, but waited in silence his Lordship's promised disclosures.

“ Edward,” he continued, “ never displayed the tender sentiments with which Julia had unconsciously inspired him, being, as he has since confessed to his brother, with-held by the fear that he should offend and grieve his parents, by entering into engagements unsanctioned by our approbation, and at an age when he could not hope to obtain it.

“ Charles, although four years younger made no mystery of his predilection for the same object; and, misled by appearances, I fancied Julia entertained for him similar sentiments, on which erroneous calculation I founded my project of uniting them.— You know into what transports of joy I expected to have surprized them, by signifying my intentions immediately on the re-
turn

turn of Charles for the last time from College; but my disappointment, my chagrin, and my astonishment, you could not know, nor are they to be defined, when the morning after his arrival you brought the intelligence which sent me to his chamber, more inclined to quarrel with his caprice than to sympathize with his weakness."

Lord Offington paused for a moment—I thought it an hour.

"The door was open," he continued, "you had forgot to shut it after you; and before I entered, the scene which presented itself entirely changed the nature of my feelings. His back was turned towards me; he stood resting his left arm against the wardrobe, and in his right hand he held a ——. Your pale looks, Rosanna, tell me that your fears have anticipated my meaning: I will spare you and myself the horrors of an explanation."

D 3

I could

I could not reply ; I could only grasp his hand, to express my thankfulness ; and if a flood of tears had not relieved my bursting heart, I think I should have expired ; my uncle discontinued his recital till, in some degree, I had recovered my composure.

“ The situation,” rejoined Lord Ossington, “ in which I surprized poor Charles, and the danger from which I so providentially rescued him, made me from that moment his confessor, his comforter, his guide, and, as I then thought, the fortunate physician of his soul’s malady.” You witnessed the successful progress of those little manœuvres by which I seduced him once more into the paths of peace, from whence he had so desperately deserted. Yesterday you was also the spectator of his great weakness, and my more bitter disappointment !—At the approach of Edward, the brother he had injured, the rival whom he dreaded ;

dreaded ; at sight of those transports which his keen penetration read in the eyes of Julia, his tranquillity turned to madness ; self-forfaken, he fell at her feet, and daringly announced a passion destructive to his honour, and solemnly abjured, in my hearing, and in the awful presence of his Maker——”

“ There is something, my dear, my tender uncle,” I cried, “ which yet remains to be told !”

“ It is to that point I am now arrived,” he replied ; “ I found it in the catalogue of his confessions, that from boys they had mutually disguised from each other their more than boyish attachment to Julia, but immediately prior to Edward’s departure from Britain, they came to an *eclaircissement*, which, on the part of Charles, ended in a challenge.

D 4

“ It

"It was refused by Edward.

"Then," said he, "relinquish your pretensions to *my* Julia!"

"Never!" answered Edward, "she is the vital spark of my existence!"

"Coward!" replied Charles, "if you are afraid to fight, let us box for her."

"Edward seeing him strip to his shirt, and deaf to remonstrances, without taking off his cloaths, put himself in a posture of defence, crying out at the same time—

"Prudence cautions me to evade the blows of a madman, but honour does not command me to return them!"

"These words, the tone of firmness in which he pronounced them, the intrepidity of his air, the noble composure with which
he

he offered his person to the threatened insults of a maniac, instead of appeasing, served only to exasperate his infatuated brother, who, in a fit of desperation, and to surprize him out of his calmness, levelled a stroke at his shoulder, which, by an unfortunate movement of the body, missed the part, where, if it had fallen, the hurt would not have been material, and alighting on his breast, brought him to the earth, apparently in a state of annihilation."

Again I trembled, but my terrors were not so excruciating at this last instance of rashness, as I experienced when told that the same hand which, in the madness of passion, he dared to lift against a brother, infinitely dear to his affections, had premeditatedly, so very lately, been raised with a view to his own destruction!

"Dreadful as this affair might have terminated," said my uncle, "by the inter-

vention of Divine Providence, the life of Edward and the senses of Charles were both restored. Humbled and penitent, he received what he durst not have asked, the generous pardon of his noble-minded brother; from which time their attachment was more strongly rivetted than ever; no other contention now existed between them, except on the score of which should resign to the other his imaginary pretensions to my adopted daughter; nor was it till after a long, tender and ardent struggle, that Charles enjoyed the happy advantage of obliterating his guilt, by sacrificing to the consequence the occasion of his rashness. He vowed never more to cherish any other sort of love for Julia but such as he entertained for his own sister. He then intended to hold these vows sacred—he has since forfeited them—his resolves perish, but his honour survives. Though he will never cease to adore, yet he will never become the husband of Julia.”

CON-

CONTINUATION.

The return of my mother ended our conference, but not prematurely; I had learnt all that was necessary for me to know; she succeeded to my place in the closet, and I retired with Julia.

Lord Offington afterwards informed me, that he took the opportunity of their being alone to consult with my mother more at large than he had yet done on the rivalry of her two sons.

He concealed nothing from her, except those scenes of horror which originated in the extravagancy of our dear, self-abandoned Charles!"

"Now tell me," said he, "you who are the best, the tenderest of parents, the
D 6 most

most exemplary of wives, and the discreetest of women—say—direct, advise, what can be done at a crisis so difficult, so delicate, where this truth is evidently established, that the same event which makes one of your sons happy will make the other miserable, each being the slave of an unconquerable passion in the same extreme and for the same object.”

“ Ah! that same object, my Lord! that same beloved object! is not her peace, as well as that of my two sons, involved by their unfortunate rivalship?—Though you have the goodness to bring *only* them forward, yet the evil will assuredly extend to Julia, and she is no less dear to me than are my own children!”

“ It certainly must extend to Julia,” replied his Lordship, “ and with all my soul I thank you, my disinterested sister, for the generous warmth with which you
are

are inclined to declare yourself the guardian of her safety ; but how will you, in the midst of those stormy conflicts, save her from becoming the wreck of that sensibility her loveliness and her virtues have raised in the hearts of my nephews ?”

“ Julia herself must be referred to on this occasion,” said my mother.

Lord Ossington, knowing the determination of Charles not to receive the hand of Julia, and believing that he would never survive to see her bestowed on another, formed no sanguine expectation from the reference to which my mother alluded ; yet obliged, rather than wound her maternal feelings, to conceal his own, he continued to listen in silence, unwilling to interrupt the beautiful arrangement of those arguments which he was conscious she would advance in support of her proposition ; and she, not doubting the readiness of his Lordship’s

ship's concurrence, made haste to explain them.

“I understand,” she continued, “this dangerous, but dear girl, has not yet been importuned with addresses from either of my sons; any common observer might suppose by the innocent freedom which has ever marked her conduct towards Charles, that he holds a superior interest in her regard, not so do I read those symptoms, not so will they be construed by those who are best acquainted with the delicate reserves of the female heart, which closes on its dearest secret, and only exposes its smaller affections to the eye of inquisition. Julia is the tender sister of Charles; but for Edward, if I do not greatly mistake, she feels more than for a brother.”

“I believe you are in the right,” cried my uncle, “but pray proceed.”

“Well,

“ Well, then, my Lord, I would next premise, that the young men not having proposed themselves to Julia, we should do well in acting the part of their representatives ; let both be proposed by your Lordship ; let Julia be entreated to make her own election ; she only can, she only ought to determine between them. *Many* may adore her, she can love but *one* ; thus, out of those darling children, we shall at least secure the felicity of two ; and whether it be Edward or Charles that shall be destined to experience the disappointment of their hopes, either, I trust, will know how to support it with manly fortitude ; and if he is the friend of himself, time will be the friend of his humiliation.”

At that moment I returned with Julia to the closet ; I did not know what was her errand thither, but her irresistible entreaties made me the companion of her intrusion.

CON-

CONTINUATION.

Judge, Mr. St. Clear, what must have been my astonishment, when my lovely friend, precipitating herself at the feet of Lord Offington and my mother, her beautiful eyes lifted to their faces, their hands clasped to her breast, and bathed with her tears, addressed them in the words that follow, pronounced with firmness, though often interrupted by sobs, which her best endeavours were insufficient to suppress.

“Behold!” cried she, “the serpent whom you have warmed in your generous bosoms!—behold her about to sting her benefactors with worse than the sharpness of death, with the pangs of domestic infelicity, mastered by her unfortunate destiny! I am not intentionally, neither am I the less guilty of your misery, because I have, without

without my own consent, been aiding to the misfortunes which by my means now hang suspended over the beloved, the revered, the honoured house of Dunstenville!—Send me from hence, banish me for ever from your arms, from your hearts, from your habitation, rather than remain where I am to witness the destruction——”

Before she had concluded the sentence, she was suddenly snatched from the floor, and alternately pressed in our embrace.

My uncle was the first who by words administered to her consolation.

“Dearest child, ever dear, and most dear Julia,” said he, “what is there, except the immediate claims of Heaven, which shall be powerful enough to separate us!”

My

My mother spoke much to the same effect ; for my part, I could only gaze, weep, and wonder. During the few moments I had been alone with Julia, I observed that she seemed agitated by some great design, which then she would not trust to my keeping, but was now fully explained.

Not silenced, but only delayed by our caresses, Julia proceeded, with additional calmness, to disburden the most grateful heart in the world of its real distresses for imaginary offences. Had she used the spells of a Circe to ensnare by her enchantments the unguarded affections of my two brothers, with no other view but the establishment of her own bewitching powers, at the expence of their torments, their senses, or their lives ; in other words, had she been a modern bred coquet, instead of the most artless of all created beings ; had our misfortunes been the coinage of her vanity, and
had

had her penitence equalled that of a Magdalen, her self-accusation could not have been more severe, or her lamentations more piercing.

“Incomparable Julia!” said my adored mother, “my sons, not *you*, are to blame, if blame can attach to the love of virtue, beauty, goodness like thine!”

“Listen, dear child,” cried my uncle, “listen to your comforter, and be comforted.”

She again cast herself on her knees before them.

“It becomes not me,” she said, “to receive the sentence that shall be pronounced by my too partial Judges, but thus kneeling at their feet, let me think myself at the Throne of Grace, testifying my gratitude,
confessing

confessing my sins, and imploring to be forgiven !”

Whilst I am intending, Mr. St. Clear, to make you comprehend the greatness of your sister's mind, I must prevent myself from running into particulars, which, however they are crowding to my pen, were I to spread them upon paper, would occupy as many weeks as there are days yet remaining of the time allotted to me for the conclusion of her narrative.

The termination of this decisive interview was equally pathetic with its commencement ; the most amicable contention ensued, powerfully tender on our parts, submissively determined on that of Julia ; she would not recede from her resolution to withdraw from the family on any other terms than being permitted to conceal herself, not only to the extent of holding no intercourse

intercoruse with, but even from the very sight of my brothers.

Necessity forced us to comply with this demand, because Julia would not relinquish it, whilst she submitted in all things else to be governed by our direction.

Neither my uncle or mother thought proper, at that time, to require her acquiescence with plans which were so nearly arranged by my mother, when our unexpected appearance arrested what might have been the reply of Lord Ossington to her proposition.

Thus, at her own request, did Julia become the prisoner of those who were not less the captives of her sweetness, when they saw it united with more than feminine magnanimity.

My

My father, on his return from N——, was admitted a partner in the confederacy, sanctioned all the steps we had taken with his approbation, hoped by these means his sons would recall those affections for each other, by which in their boyish days they had been distinguished; observed, that if neither of them were completely happy, yet would neither be quite miserable; gloried in the magnitude of Julia's exertions for the restoration of his domestic tranquillity, blessed the fortitude with which she had sacrificed her acknowledged tenderness for Edward to the peace of his less fortunate brother; stole a visit to her chamber, embraced the dear recluse, and wept that she could not be his daughter!

CONTINUATION.

I now bring you back to the day when Julia, in order to avoid her ill-fated lovers, took refuge in her own apartment, there to confine herself until I had prepared for my return to town, whither, at her own instigation, she was to accompany me, there to enjoy a more certain asylum from their pursuit than if residing under the same protection and the same roof with themselves.

They had, as I have before observed, walked out together immediately after breakfast; we saw no more of them until we were all, except Julia, seated round the dinner table. How different *then* was their appearance to what it had been in the morning?—They entered arm in arm, all traces of suspicion and chagrin were banished from their countenance, which now
shone

shone with brotherly love and brotherly confidence.

¶ Their looks alone betrayed their surprize that Julia was absent; neither would venture to ask questions, or even trust themselves with the annunciation of a name so dangerous, so idolized.

Lord Offington seemed to enjoy their tender perplexities, but much more the mutual good-will that pervaded their attentions to each other; in this last sentiment my mother herself participated, but to see them suffering under the torments of suspense added nothing to the tranquillity of our minds.

During the time of dinner, I was less employed in satisfying the incitements of appetite than in watching the various changes which passed over the faces of my vainly conjecturing brothers; sometimes the
eyes

eyes of Edward glanced towards the door, fraught with animation, expecting, no doubt, to see the goddess of his idolatry make her *entrée*; at every disappointment a cloud would envelope their brilliancy, and in striving to conceal, he more effectually exposed his mortification.

Charles, with infinitely greater caution, attempted to hide what was passing in his mind under a mask of the most easy indifference; he eat violently, talked rapidly, tasted every dish, and enlarged on every topic.

This extraordinary exertion raised my surprize, but did not impose on my credulity; whilst I gave him credit for appearances, I made him debtor to reality.

Dinner being ended, and the servants withdrawn, Lord Offington, selecting from the desert some of its fairest fruit, said,

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“ I will

“ I will carry this to my heroic Julia, and make it an excuse for asking how she bears her confinement.”

The bridle of restraint fell from the lips of Edward, and he exclaimed, as my uncle left the room, “ Dear mother, in the name of Heaven, what is the matter with Julia? —Why is she confined?—Why does my Lord Offington call her his *heroic* Julia ?”

Charles, as if indifferent to the question or answer, hastily started from his chair, drew out his watch, hummed a tune, and walked towards the window, being indebted to this manœuvre for the advantage of concealing a treacherous countenance, which he durst not trust with the history of his feelings.

My mother was endeavouring to evade the enquiries of Edward, which every moment became more and more urgent, when my

my uncle, with whose present plans she was unacquainted, therefore feared to mar them by her ignorance of their tendency, took his place at the table, and called upon Charles to fill his wine.

It was a command not to be disputed; he rejoined us; but, ah! how pale that face which a moment before had been overspread with vermillion!

“Let me not interrupt you,” said his Lordship, addressing my mother, “you were listening to some warm interrogations from my nephew Edward, and, if I guess right, *Julia Dunstenville* has been the subject of them.”

Nothing was so common as to hear him unite the name of Julia with that of his own, but he now laid upon the latter a more than common emphasis, and it produced a

more than common effect on his auditors, for we looked at each other as if this had been the first time we heard them pronounced together. Charles *said* nothing, indeed, but his eyes spoke *what* the faltering tongue of Edward softly whispered.—*Would to God she was indeed Julia Dunstenville!*

My mother brought us out of our pretty general consternation, by replying to the observation from whence it had arisen, that he was not mistaken, that her son had been asking information concerning Julia. “I have,” said she, “referred him to your Lordship.” Then rising, and bidding me follow her, we adjourned to the apartment of your sister.

It was but too visible that melancholy had been the companion of her solitude; yet nothing but the traces on her beautiful cheeks

cheeks of the tears she had been shedding remained to testify that her exalted greatness of mind was sometimes subjected to the inroad of human weaknesses; her soul's strength renovated at our appearance.

Whilst her arms encircled the neck of my mother, again she generously confessed the tenderness of that passion which for ever bound her to Edward; again renewed the awful vows that were before registered in Heaven, never whilst Charles should be in existence, and single, to become the wife of his brother.

CONTINUATION.

Lord Offington joined us in Julia's dressing-room, after holding a long and interesting conversation with his two nephews, which he assured us had terminated very much to their honour and his satisfaction.

"They are rivals, but they are friends," said he to Julia; "they both adore you, but each refuses to be happy at the expence of the other. I put them to the trial before I ventured to deliver your final determination of seeing them no more, until they could convince you their sentiments were confined within the bounds of fraternal attachment. They have submitted to your sentence; they do not even desire to risk their obedience, by requesting to be indulged with another interview; it *must* be dangerous

dangerous they say, and it *may* be fatal to their strongest resolves. They have formed plans of their own, by which they hope to redeem their lost senses; and I fear," added he, smiling, "they are not to be recovered as long as they remain within the hemisphere of your attractions."

Julia still supported the steadiness of her mind with wonderful energy; but my mother, who surmised what these plans were, sought an explanation; which his Lordship positively declined; he had given them, he said, his own assent, and promised the whole weight of his interest to obtain the sanction of his brother; then turned away, to avoid observing the momentary gloom which passed over her maternal features.

It was late in the evening when my father returned from N——; he supped with his family, and afterwards held a long conference with Lord Ossington respecting the

solicitations with which he had that day been charged by his nephews, when it was finally agreed that Edward's inclination for the army should be gratified, and that Charles should be permitted to travel, such being the plans laid down by each for the re-establishment of that repose which an unfortunate passion had shaken to its very foundation.

These arrangements, when communicated to Julia and my mother, cost them rivers of unavailing tears, but from the decision of Lord Offington there was no appeal. Three days after, the beloved youths, accompanied by his Lordship and myself, set out for the metropolis, leaving Julia with my parents, to comfort and be comforted by them.

Edward was soon provided with a commission in the Guards; and Charles, joining himself with a party of two young men
and

and their governors, bound for the continent, waited the moment of their departure as anxiously, as if in leaving his native country he expected to leave behind him all recollection of those scenes, the burden of which his memory did not retain without the most evident torments.

At length the moment arrived, the dreadful moment, which was for ever to separate us from the most beloved of human beings, whose faults were the faults of a too ardent sensibility, and whose virtues were of a description the most exalted!—He stretched out his arms to receive the last embrace of a brother as noble-minded as himself, but more happy, because less entitled to the reproaches of his own conscience!

“Edward,” he cried, “the rash, but generous vows by which you meant to secure, has ultimately destroyed my peace!”

—Had you been more kind to yourself, you would have been less cruel to me!—I could have borne to see you the husband of Julia!—Oh! yes, I could have borne it!—But you have sworn that whilst I live she shall not be your wife!—The bar which obstructs your felicity shall never be thrown down by the impious hand of suicide!—But remember, when you hear that, by the will of Heaven, I am no longer the hindrance of your union with Julia, remember then my last, my most ardent request, and let me behold you in spirit blessing and blessed in the arms of our adorable——”

Unable to finish the sentence, he rushed out of the house, leaped into his chaise, and from that moment—Oh, Mr. St. Clear, my heart revolts to announce we saw him no more!

CONTINUATION.

After this fatal separation, my uncle returned to Ossington Castle, and Edward came to reside with us. My husband is one of the most cheerful men in the world, and my brother greatly stood in need of such a companion; for the parting words of Charles had reduced his spirits to an almost state of despondency.

What I own greatly astonished me, and for which I have never been able to account, was the serenity that marked the adieus pronounced by every one of the family, myself and Edward excepted; it seemed as if *they* were alone inspired with hope, *we* only with despair.

Despair, by the allotment of an all-gracious Providence, though sometimes the

visitor, is seldom the resident in the human heart; every day lessened the keenness of our sorrow, and every letter which we received from the dear wanderer removed us farther and farther from the gloomy prospects we had loved to contemplate.

Julia continued the beloved guest of my parents; we often corresponded, and sometimes I would steal from the bosom of my family to pass a few weeks at the Castle. Edward, as you may imagine, never attended me on these occasions. Ah! how could he trust himself with the sight of that being, whose very name, consistent to the most refined point of honour, he had interdicted himself from the gratification of pronouncing.

But, although he did not go with me to the very spot inhabited by Julia, neither was he neglectful in performing the duties of a son with exactness; for whilst I made
up

up her society at the Castle, my father, mother, and uncle, met him at Colt-Hill, where he spent as much time in their society as the claims of his profession would permit.

Little circumstances, and short movements like these, formed all the events which occurred during the first thirteen months from the time when Charles left us to lament his absence—an absence, the termination of which has been swallowed up in eternity!

I must endeavour to repel, to extinguish them is impossible, those sparklings of inflammable retrospective emotions, which, if they kindle with so much vigour at the very prelude of my misfortunes, may, when collected together, consume the whole stock of my fortitude in their rapid conflagration!

I know

I know but one way to avoid this terrible evil. When fugitive affections have lacerated our hearts in their passage, and when the wounds are beginning to heal, there can be no policy in pursuing, seizing, and bringing them back, to renew their torturing propensities. I shall therefore, Mr. St. Clear, lay before you the aggregate of my troubles, without dwelling on the singular distresses individually by which they were attended.

The death of my revered parents was not at all hastened by the communication made to them of my brother's decease abroad; an event they received with something more than Christian fortitude, with something more than composure; and, perhaps, this absolute submission to the dispensation of Providence originated in the fatal *pre-sentiment* they entertained of the little, little space which divided them from
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an everlasting re-union to a son so beloved, and whose prospects in this world were so truly equivocal !

The heart-rending intelligence that Charles, after separating from the party with whom he left England, had fallen the victim of a contagious fever, which at that time raged in the part of the Netherlands approximating with the *route* he pursued, was conveyed to my uncle through an old and faithful servant, appointed by himself to officiate more immediately about the person of my brother, whose request it had been that his body might be suffered to remain where it then rested ; and the venerable domestic also declared, with his Lordship's approbation, he would never quit that spot where the ashes of his young master were deposited.

I try to stop my tears, but they will flow !

CON-

CONTINUATION.

Edward, the most sincere, the most unaffected of mourners, shut himself up in his chamber, and refused to be comforted; on the contrary, Lord Offington, whose affection for the dear deceased whilst living might be said to rival, if not exceed that of a tender father for his own offspring, came directly to town, and when not shut up in the apartment of Edward, was employed in preparing dispatches for my late brother's servant, as actively as though nothing extraordinary had occurred to discompose his systematic regularity.

“ I love the good old man,” said he;
“ he has been faithful to his trust; I have
consented to his petition; I have allowed
him to settle wherever he pleases, and made
him

him remittances to render the remnant of his days comfortable."

There can be no doubt that the feelings of sorrow, acting upon the minds of an uncle like ours, of parents like ours, must have been equally pungent and powerful with those which were experienced in all the pomp of wretchedness by Edward, Julia, and myself, therefore I am to conclude, that if their passions were as strong as ours, their reason was still stronger.

Lord Ossington would have hurried my brother away with him at the moment of his departure for the Castle, and reminded him of the last solemn injunction of the dear departed, but met with unexpected resistance.

"I honour," said Edward, "the memory of my generous, unfortunate brother—I revere his commands, yet my soul, in this.

this moment of sadness, revolts at obedience !”

“In other words,” cried my uncle, impatiently, “you have forgotten to love Julia !”

“Forgotten to love Julia !” he repeated, “No, my Lord, I must first forget that I exist—I must forget your unexampled goodness—I must forget my own unworthiness, my own wretchedness—I must forget that the idol of my affection was also the idol of another ; that other I must also forget has paid the sacrifice of his life to my selfishness, to my *abhorred* selfishness !—When, my dear uncle, I can obliterate from memory these strongly impressed characters, I shall still have to learn by what more than magic I am to forget that I have loved, that I do love, that I ever shall love Julia, the adorable Julia !”

Lord

Lord Offington regarded him with a look of complacency, blended with pity ; after a moment's pause held out his hand, and whilst Edward, with respectful ardour, carried it to his lips, he said, tears starting to his eyes—

“ I approve your sensibility, but I blame its extravagance ; you think yourself accessory to the death of Charles, and yet you are innocent of that event, without any sort of reservation, as I am.”

My brother uttered a sigh so expressive, that it seemed to say, *I rather believe the evidence of my own heart, and that tells me I am guilty.*

“ Do you doubt the truth of my assertions ?” continued this kind uncle. “ Can you suppose me capable of deceiving you ? I would have every man measure his conduct at the standard of truth, rather than weigh

weigh them in the scales of adventitious circumstances. Use, my dear boy, the *standard*, have nothing to do with the *weights*; by one the stature of your virtues will be exalted; in the other there is much trick, and you will be made to suppose that they kick the beam."

"How delicious!" exclaimed Edward, "how precious the balm you would pour into the bleeding wounds of a self-reproaching conscience!—But, oh! my tender, my too partial comforter, by what arguments will you convince me that I have not indeed been the murderer of my brother?—Has not my perverse inclinations driven him from the arms of his family?—And am I not ostensibly the cause that he will never more return to them?"

Lord Offington smiled, yes, he actually did smile, Mr. St. Clear, at what he called the romantic rhapsody of a diseased understanding.

standing. It did not, I confess, appear to me in the same light, yet I revered this lapse from seriousness in favour of humanity. Edward was fast sinking under the oppression of his own feelings; and my uncle, from his authority, as well as the influence preserved over our hearts by invariable affection and unlimited bounty, was alone equal to snatch him from the horrid precipice of absolute despondency.

“All these lamentations are extremely childish,” continued his Lordship, “for an event which cannot be recalled, and wherein, I repeat, you are no more culpable than myself; nay, if blame must of necessity attach to either, I am the person on whom it should alight. I approved of his going abroad; I hastened his departure; I have been the manager; I am, therefore, answerable for the consequences, yet, like you, I do not turn self-tormentor! Charles might have gone off in this country as well
well

well as another. Read his letters again; read them over and over; study their cheerful contents till you are convinced that neither want of health, low-spiritedness, or past disappointments, attended him to the continent; then blush at your pusillanimity, and get rid as fast as you can of that imbecillity which is now the only foe to your happiness. Meantime, I shall return to tell Julia the task I have set you, and when you are master of the subject, we shall expect to see you."

Edward would have cast himself at the feet of his consoling peremptory guardian, abjured his error, and besought a corner in his carriage; but already my dear uncle was seated in it, and the horses flying rather than running, on their way to Offington Castle.

CONTINUATION.

My now more than ever disturbed brother, who considered the last words of Lord Offington as the sentence of his banishment from Julia, acted so very like a frantical lover, that, to prevent any serious attack on his senses, I volunteered my services to conduct him whither his ardent wishes directed. I said I would even go with him to the very residence of Julia, make his peace with my uncle, and plead his cause with his mistress. He eagerly closed with my proposition, and in three days we followed Lord Offington to the Castle.

We arrived at the dinner hour; the family were assembled, the servants in motion, and the second course just placing on the table. I beckoned some of the domestics

tics who were running forward to announce me, not to proceed, and putting my face just within the door, meaning to have surprised the little circle with the sound of my voice, when the sight of so many mourners, and the recollection for whom these fables were put on, deprived me of articulation; I sighed, but could not speak!—My uncle started from his chair, pressed me in his arms, but the next moment resigned me to those of my parents and Julia; he asked no questions, because, surmising the truth, that I did not come alone, he knew he should find my companion at no great distance, and ran out to receive him.

¶ This being our first meeting since the death of my brother, I ought to have comforted the dear authors of our existence, but that office was reversed; for yielding to my incapacity, by their fortitude they supported my weakness. I had never seen them

them look better; Julia's cheeks indeed, had lost many of its roses, which grief had shaken from their stems; again they glowed with more lively tints than ever, as I mentioned my being accompanied by Edward, who in the same moment my uncle exultingly presented to our enraptured parents, afterwards to Julia, not less enraptured than themselves; for whilst her tongue kept the secret of her heart, her eyes betrayed it.

I can give no account by what gradations my brother arrived at the ultimatum of all his hopes; I only remained eight and forty hours at the Castle, then returned to my family, and in three months after was commissioned by Lord Offington to procure the whole paraphernalia with which the beloved daughter of his adoption was to be presented prior to her marriage, which was fixed for celebration early in December; it was now only June; we had

already mourned six months, six more would accomplish our time of wearing it; and till then, though the most passionate lovers in the world, neither Julia or Edward would have plighted their vows at the altar, even could they have seen that by this protraction they must experience years of tedious expectation.

November, the supposed harbinger of their felicity, was not the less welcome for bringing in its train gloom, storms, and tempests—Alas! they were the emblems of our common misfortunes, and not the forerunners of partial happiness!—Before half its days were numbered, my dear mother fell sick, and at the expiration of its limits we lost—Oh! Mr. St. Clear, this is a soul harrowing retrospection, and I cannot trust myself to pursue it!

CONTINUATION.

Here was another, and still more dreadful interruption to the projected union—an union hardly less anxiously desired by ourselves than by the parties more interested in its accomplishment.

Julia now more than ever possessed the hearts of my father and uncle, on account of her unwearied assiduities, day and night, at the pillow of disease; and because the inroad extreme sorrow had made on her constitution, when these dear attentions could no longer avail, added to affection, gratitude, sympathy, and the terrors of apprehension for her safety, their own sorrows were hushed to silence in her's; they could scarce bear that she should be absent from their sight; she continued to reside with them, gradually recovered her strength, and

lost nothing of her attachment for Edward, whose torments were undescribable as long as her health continued doubtful.

Once more I shall bring you to the very eve of your sister's marriage, from which I must again re-conduct you, by the interference of another event, fatal as that which snatched from our arms the most adored and exemplary of mothers.

My uncle, who came to town, that his presence might accelerate the preparations for a ceremony so ardently desired, so long interrupted, having compleated every arrangement, was to have taken Mr. York, myself, and his lawyer, in his own carriage, on the following morning, to Offington Castle, and two days after the hands of Julia and Edward were to have been united.

The person of Lord Offington had latterly grown extremely corpulent; his neck
was

was naturally short, and having left off to use exercise, a deep colour had settled on his countenance; at our request, he never objected to consult with the faculty, but as regularly refused to be governed by their prescriptions; they particularly advised frequent bleedings; but his answer was always the same, that he would rather submit his head to the block than his arm to the lancet.

I never remember to have seen him in better spirits than as we sat at supper, incessantly talking of our morning excursion, of the delightful consequences which were to follow immediately on our arrival at the Castle; and when the fork dropped from his hand, supposing it to have been occasioned by the flight to which his subject had elated him, and being just dividing the wing of a chicken, I did not immediately look towards him; but, good God! what

were my feelings in this state of fancied security, when the cries of my husband awakened me to the horrors of the moment!—Sudden as death had levelled his dart at the best, the most benevolent of human beings, it was not so swift as to prevent Mr. York from catching him in his fall, and receive his last sigh on the bosom of friendship!

What a train of dark complexioned evils has it been, and still must be my fate to recall from the depth of memory, where they are for ever entombed!—Ah! Sir, what have I said?—It is only the shadow of my woes which I have made to pass in review before you. I tell you only that we lost the dearest of mothers, the best of uncles; but for your sake as well as my own, I do not tell you what we endured of affliction from the end of one trouble to the beginning of another.

A shock

A shock so unexpected, for which we were so totally unprepared, opened anew those deep wounds that time, hope, and the approaching nuptials of your sister had merely skinned over; but when again exposed to the keen dart of bitter regrets, discovered the gangrene which lurked and rankled beneath it.

My father took to his bed; Julia yielded to her sorrows, and these sorrows reduced her to a skeleton; it was several months before the former could attend the House of Peers, to which he had been called on the death of my uncle, and much longer ere the latter was pronounced capable of undertaking a voyage to Lisbon, whither the faculty ordered she should be conveyed, as the last and only chance of conquering, or at least resisting the disorder which threatened her existence.

A residence of nineteen months under the influence of this benign climate restored Julia to her country and Dunstenville to his senses; he had borne her in his arms to the packet, and on her re-landing, she walked by his side in perfect health.

I had attended the dear party to, and fetched them back from Lisbon, but could not leave my family to remain with them the whole time, which I the less regretted, my father and brother being entirely devoted to the restoration of our beloved patient, besides her female companion, who accepted the office of my substitute when I returned back to England, was, in every respect, a *chaperone* so respectable, so tender, so entertaining, that I knew Julia would lose nothing by exchanging my services for those of the agreeable Lady Hastings.

Lady

Lady Hastings is an amiable Dowager, who, with two daughters, even, if possible, more lovely than Julia herself, had come thither, like her, in pursuit of health, and with equal success, left the place at the same time we did, but not to re-visit their native country; she meant to compleat their education at foreign Courts before she presented them at her own. Lady Elizabeth was then only sixteen, Lady Jane one year younger; they had no other governess than their accomplished parent, and it was very soon to be seen that her whole time had been dedicated to render them worthy of so charming a mother.

CONTINUATION.

I know not, Mr. St. Clear, why, at nearly the conclusion of my narrative, I should have intruded these strangers on your notice—What is Lady Hastings, what are her beautiful daughters to you?—Yes, they must, they ought to interest you; they have been the friends of your sister, therefore cannot be entirely indifferent to yourself.

If this apology will not do, let me address another which your vanity *may*, and no doubt *will* adopt. I have a particular gratification in honouring myself with the title of your correspondent, which, rather than relinquish too soon, I take all sort of methods to lengthen out those subjects on which I *dare* to expatiate; and now nearly exhausted, others there are that must almost
be

be enveloped in silence; the slightest touch will consign me to new and excruciating conflicts.

My dear father's health began to decline gradually from the time when death separated him from the wife he loved, and from a brother to whom obligations had bound him by stronger ties than those of blood.

He received little benefit from the change of climate; he thought himself in danger, therefore hastened to complete the union which had so often, so fatally been retarded; and soon after our return, I enjoyed the supreme felicity of saluting Julia Viscountess Dunstenville!—Never was bride more beloved! Never was happiness more brilliantly appointed!—My father hugged to his bosom the long absent guest; it animated the beautiful countenance of Julia, and sparkled in the eyes of her husband!

That delightful ceremony, which united the most amiable, the most ardent of lovers, was performed in London, and under the most auspicious circumstances, for every heart was impressed with the warmest wishes for their future felicity !

Lady Dunstenville was now, for the first time, recognized by the imperious Sir Robert St. Clear and his evil-minded sisters ; a third person was employed to negotiate between her and them, but my father put a stop to the negociation, by sending them word, that he would never admit they could have any possible claim of alliance with *his* daughter, who had discarded their own sister from the house of her father !— After which unqualified repeller we were troubled with no more of their messages, until that memorable one announcing Lady Sedley to be almost at our door. Nothing, it must be allowed, could equal the audacity

city of such a visit, except the flaunting impertinence with which her Ladyship sustained it. No doubt she had been giving herself airs to poor Sir Peter, which, without this one *bold* push, she could not have decently supported.

Notwithstanding the hopes which had kindled in the hearts of his children, whilst contemplating the placid smiles, or listening to the cheerful conversation of my father; notwithstanding his repeated assurances that his health amended, and that his mind was restored to all its former happiness, the diminution in his strength became more visible, till, by degrees, our closed eyes were forced open to all the dangers of his situation.

When he could no longer leave his apartment, and when the physicians ceased to flatter us with even the possibility of his recovery,

recovery, his spirits seemed in the greatest vigour. We were always assembled in his chamber; and if at any time we so far forgot our parts, as to betray symptoms of uneasiness, he would reproach our cowardice in language so apostolic, that if it did not entirely reconcile us to the loss we were about to sustain, at least made us so much in love with death, as to draw down our envy upon him, reserving only compassion for ourselves!

He had the consolation of surviving the intelligence that an heir might be expected, but did not live to embrace his grandson.

The day preceding that of the closing scene, when he had taken a last solemn leave of his weeping children, with as much serenity as if bidding them adieu for a short night, at the expiration of which he again expected to embrace them, he put a sealed packet

packet into the hands of my brother.—
When I am a little more composed, you
shall hear the words which attended the de-
livery of this mysterious paper.

CONTINUATION.

“Edward,” said the expiring faint,
smiling at bodily torture, “to your keep-
ing I confide this my last will and testa-
ment, the contents of which must be held
sacred until it can be opened in the pre-
sence of Lady Hastings and her two daugh-
ters, Lady Elizabeth and Lady Jane.

My father paused, but not from inability
to proceed, he rather seemed animated
than depressed by his subject.

Dunstenville, who knelt at the side of his
bed, kissed with reverence the hand ex-
tended towards him, tears covered his face,
he

he would have promised obedience, but could not articulate.

“ I do not doubt,” continued my father, without appearing to observe my brother’s emotions, “ I do not doubt, my dearest son, that the promise I exact from your filial piety must alarm and surprize you ; there is nothing in my request which ought to disturb you ; on the contrary, it will only be the means of producing good to yourself, to every one of you, my dear children, by whom I am now surrounded. That astonishment created by the injunction respecting the seals of my will, which are on no account to be broken till the return of Lady Hastings and her family, will abate, when I tell you that *her* interest is more intimately connected with your own than you have ever had reason to imagine, further, that, unknown to yourselves, I have for many years held a frequent and affectionate correspondence with that most
excellent

excellent woman ; she was also the friend of your beatified mother, to whom, I humbly trust my soul will soon re-unite in the regions of immortality !”

For a moment his eyes and hands were lifted towards Heaven ; his lips moved, but his voice uttered no sound, till having ended his silent ejaculation, he renewed the interesting subject with renovated ardour.

“ You, my children, supposed that my meeting Lady Hastings at Lisbon was the work of chance. No ; it was premeditated ! she came thither at my request ; it will not, I hope, be very long before she revisits her native country ; the design for which she quitted it is happily accomplished. When you see her she will unveil the mystery enveloped in my connection with her family, till then restrain your impatience to become acquainted with the happiness she will then be impowered to communicate.”

I have

I have torn my heart in a thousand pieces to give you, Mr. St. Clear, this little debate from the chamber of death!—But if I do not lay down my pen my tears will obliterate all that I have written.

CONTINUATION.

Fourteen months have elapsed since that fatal moment which robbed us of our last and revered parent, yet Lady Hastings does not return!—So much expectation deadens, in some degree, that curiosity excited by the last words of my lamented father; we often mingle their names together, wish for her arrival, wonder what fortunate intelligence she will bring to us when she does come, but all this without experiencing the extreme anxiety by which at first we were perpetually agitated.

After

After all this, Lady Hastings is, I suppose, some very near relation of ours; but why so long concealed it is impossible to guess; I have loved her for her own sake, I shall now love her more than ever, because she has once been dear to those whose memories are to me the dearest of all my hoarded treasures.

Thus, Mr. St. Clear, I at last arrive at the very verge of my narrative, having nothing more to add to its almost immeasurable length, but that my brother, being called upon to fight the battles of his country, tore himself from the arms of Julia and his infant son, consigning them to my charge. I have been careful of the precious deposits, and am now in daily expectation of seeing them restored to each other.

To-morrow I hope to enclose one more letter from Julia; if I should be disappointed,

ed, I can positively wait no longer, otherwise I have been employing myself to no manner of purpose; for if my packet is not at the India House in three days, its passage is inevitably forfeited.



LETTER

LETTER XLVIII.

MR. YORK TO LADY ROSANNA YORK.

DEAREST creature! you know I am not of a very jealous temper, yet you herewith receive my commands to immediately close your literary correspondence with the brother of our Julia!

Ah! how beautifully are your eyes sparkling at this moment, when, for the first time, you receive a *husband's* commands, whose pride it has been to obey you in all things! I guess what vivid lightning those precious gems will emit, and most sincerely wish myself within the vortex of its destructive influence.

Notwith-

Notwithstanding this severe prohibition, I am too much a man of the world not to know, that when a fashionable lady is curtailed in one favourite pursuit, we must point out another she might happen to like better, or take all the melting consequences of her red hot vengeance ; such a remedy for your grievances, and such a self-saving manœuvre for my own safety, I am now going to propose.

Yes, I will make you confess, Rosanna, that the latitude I am willing to allow you, rather than destroy peace and quietness, shall be *only* inferior to what is permitted to Lady —, Lady —, and some other ladies, more properly of *my* acquaintance than *yours*, by their infinitely dearer loving Lords of domestic tranquillity than myself.

Well, then, you have my authority to see, to talk with, and to esteem as much as
you

you please St. Clear, the amiable St. Clear! who is now with me, and will follow this letter in I do not know how few moments; for when almost at your door, he will only then send it off by a servant to announce his appearance, and prepare you for directing him to the Land of Promise. Let neither hedges, ditches, mountains, or rivers, deter you from giving him the very shortest path to the presence of his mistress. Love sees no difficulties; and such a lover as St. Clear, if he did, would only see to to overcome them.

The half hour which politeness must exact from St. Clear's impatience, will, on his part, be so crowded with questions concerning your two *absentees*, and on yours, if you do us the honour to give us a place in your memory, with an equal number, of which your husband and children are to be the happy subjects; so that, concluding he will have no time to tell you his own history,

history, I am inclined to do it for him, at least by what accident he is returned to England, instead of having proceeded to India, that when you meet he may give himself to less *selfish* topics of conversation.

Being seized with a violent fever just as the ship in which he sailed touched at St. Helen's, she proceeded on her voyage, but left him behind; it was three months before the faculty pronounced him out of danger, and then his constitution remained so debilitated, that the burning climate of Asia, he was assured by them, would prove fatal to his life; they remanded him back to England, recommended the Bath waters, and not any more to undertake his intended expedition, at soonest, till the departure of the ensuing spring fleet.

Poor St. Clear thought this a terrible sentence; he was in haste to leave the land where his supposed unfaithful, yet beloved

Ellen

Ellen resided ; besides, it was making two voyages instead of one, a fore consideration to any man who by his profession is not betrothed to the ocean.

Making the best of a bad matter, he once more stepped on board a vessel homeward bound, and about the mid-way of his passage, finding his strength almost renovated, he hailed one of our Indiamen going eastward, and the weather being remarkably fine for a salt water party, agreed with the ship's captain to take him on board.

St. Clear enquired what passengers he carried, and was advised to come and see before he shipped his baggage ; both vessels were lying to with so little wind, as made a visit from one to the other extremely commodious, the captain extended his invitation, and two other gentlemen besides St. Clear consented to eat their soup that day at his mess.

Now, my dear Rosey, what excellent materials, for want of your descriptive talents, am I about to serve in the same manner as an old cook once served my Aunt Bridget; I must tell you the story, for it is a good one, besides being *a-propos* to my own.

A *friend* had sent her six ortolans, for which that very morning he had paid as many guineas, expecting, no doubt, the flavour of these delicate morsels would at least remain on her pallet till the time of will-making came round, which generally happened twice every year. A large party were summoned to partake of the delicious repast, and Dolly was charged by her mistress to be sure and dress these little birds well, "because," said she, "every one of them has cost my *friend* a guinea."

Alas! Doll had never before even heard that there really were any such birds on the face

face of the earth, to cook them, therefore, was quite out of her province; what she did not know she would not ask; and my good aunt's friend, who happened to be one of the elected circle of epicures, had the mortification of seeing them sent to table boiled in their feathers, and every one swimming in butter.

I believe in my conscience Dolly was less wit than fool, for when called upon with violence, justified by the occasion, to answer before the tribunal of an exasperated jury for the irreparable crime she had committed, this was her short, simple defence—

“Laws, Ma'm! you told me the little birds cost a guinea a-piece, and at that rate every feather I reckoned to have cost two-pence, so I thought they must be a miraculous sort of an animal, and that the feathers were to be eaten as well as the flesh.”

G 2

Yes,

Yes, Rosanna, I am reduced to the very same predicament with the philosophical Dolly; the ortolans are in my hands, but I do not know how to cook them delicately.

The plain truth is, that on board the outward bound ship St. Clear met with Colonel Cary and his Lady, by the former of whom he was no sooner recognized, on being presented by his name, than he demanded a private conference, in which, by fully exposing his own conduct with that of his colleague, Mrs. Osterly, now Mrs. Beresford, he amply expunged from that of his daughter every imputation of unfaithfulness or levity.

St. Clear, on this fortunate explanation, acted, I suppose, as any other true lover would have acted, he obtained the Colonel's consent for espousing the fair Ellen, resigned the management of his affairs in India to the father's direction, and on the
wings

wings of the winds flew to compleat his engagements at the feet of the daughter.

How many rich materials have I wasted on a dozen lines?—Enough, at least, to have furnished a modern novel writer with matter for half a volume. Should you choose to enlarge on my plan, I have in reserve large stocks of pathetics! astonishments! and exclamations! with which articles I shall be proud to serve your Ladyship, not knowing how to dispose of them in my own details.

St. Clear is impatient for his leave of audience; I shall therefore not detain him longer than to request you will make up for my deficiency in point of politeness, by thanking him, with your accustomed graciousness, for the honour he has done me by making my house the first into which he entered on his return to Britain. By the

by, you owe him many acknowledgments on your own account ; for had he not once seen you with his sister, he never might, indeed he never could have bestowed a thought on your husband.

Our friendship began with our acquaintance ; it only commenced yesterday morning, yet, if I possess as much skill in forming judgments on the sincerity of others, as I repose implicit confidence in my own, I then venture to pronounce it will end only with our existence.

Short as the time has been which we have passed together, it would have been still shorter, but for a certain spell that I threw over his senses ; yet it is not I that am the enchanter, it is you who are the enchantress !—it was your letters that contained the charm of incantation, which so long held him captive from the sight of his mistress ;

mistress; your engaging narrative of her sufferings and rescue has sufficiently employed his time, and disciplined his passions.

I shall not say a word about the boys or myself; St. Clear will tell you every thing. For my part, I think you had better all come to town than wait the arrival of Lord Offington at Colt-Hill. He will most probably land at Portsmouth, and Julia must lose many hours of transport by planting herself at a distance, when she might approach so much nearer.

Adieu, adorable Rosanna! God bless and keep you!

St. Clear is again at my elbow—he is at once pleased and uneasy. The restlessness of a lover's bosom is like that of the ocean, ever agitated, turbulent or tempestuous.

The storm my dilatoriness has raised, though you will believe with no criminal intent, may overpower me if I do not instantly subscribe myself

Your inviolably affectionate husband,

G. YORK.



LETTER

LETTER XLIX.

LADY ROSANNA YORK TO MR. YORK.

I AM debating with myself whether you do not give me stronger proofs of your attachment when I am absent from than when I am present with you. I shall draw up the evidence on both sides of the question, and afterwards determine which will be most for my interest, to continue vagabondizing with any good Christian, or even Samaritan, who may open their doors to give me entrance, or return home, there to practice all the meek submissive duties of my domestic calling.

At home, I am only your wife, and because I have quite spoilt you, by making myself nearly a fixture either in my nur-

fery or drawing-room, always knowing where I am to be found, you seldom seek me!—Six hours in the day you spend in your office or in the House of Cômmons, fix more at levees, Cabinet dinners, or laying your head together with those of the other State Ministers, arranging matters for the *good* of your *country*, whilst the *gratification* of your poor *wife* is totally forgotten!

Abroad I am so much less your *own* immediate property, that, instead of a neglected wife, I become your *adorable* mistress; and though I do not see you, except mentally, quite so often as if still presiding over your household, nor am so delightfully startled by the dear well-known knock at the door, to which my foolish heart used so joyfully to vibrate; neither am I subjected to the perpetual mortification of hearing you cry out, “I must be going, I cannot stay with you one moment longer!

Here

Here I have no expectation—*There* I am all expectation. Here I have no disappointments—*There* I am for ever disappointed.

When under the same roof, if in the course of your peregrinations you honoured me with a few lines, your notes were so short as to be hardly worth opening; instead of these, I now receive weekly volumes of wit, love, and all those little tender insinuations, so pleasing to vanity, so delicious to affection.

A thousand other parallel witnesses, crowding to give in their evidence, at this moment obtrude themselves, but I shall let them pair off, and dismiss the Court with this final sentence, that, *as Heaven is the only certain place of rest for the wretched, so there is no surer refuge for the happy wife who returns to them, than the arms of an indulgent husband.*

I might not, perhaps, have exactly authenticated this impartial verdict, but that I am in extreme haste to speak of Mr. St. Clear.

It was about eight o'clock in the evening when your last letter made its appearance; as I snatched it from the servant, I enquired who had brought it, being sure it did not come by the post, and fearing I know not what of accidents, which might have happened to yourself or the boys, to occasion its being conveyed by an especial messenger.

The information that it was brought by one of Mr. St. Clear's servants, and that Mr. St. Clear himself would probably arrive at Colt-Hill in less than an hour, relieved me from the torments of apprehension to plunge me into the very abyss of conjecture.

Who,

Who, or what could be this Mr. St. Clear, that approached with so much familiarity at an hour so unseasonable for visits of a common description?—Lady Offington's brother it could not be! *one* having a *title*, the other, as I supposed, being by this time arrived in India, to whom I had all but finished the voluminous packet, which I jointly engaged with Julia to furnish out for his information.

These reflections, mingled with my ideas, as I broke the seal of your letter, which at once converted disagreeable doubts to delightful certainties, and the fears of being broken in upon by an unwelcome intruder to the active hopes, that, owing to the arrival of this *one* unexpected visitor, three persons would consequently be rendered happy!

Notwithstanding the cordiality with which I am always ready to sympathize in
the

felicity of those I love, there is a certain principle implanted by nature in every human heart, so inclining to self-gratification, that being entirely governed by this same prevailing principle, instead of answering the ardent young man's enquiries, after the first compliments of ceremony had passed between us, I left him to imagine whether his sister was ill or well, whether his mistress might be dead or living, to stun him with a thousand questions, of which our dear boys, and your still dearer self, were the animating subjects.

Mr. St. Clear had the politeness not only to listen, without betraying any very strong symptoms of impatience, but also replied particularly to every one of my multiplying interrogations with as much real good humour as if he had supposed all tender connections were exclusively my own, of course that none of them could be claimed by himself.

But

But this complaisance I was too reasonable to hope would last for ever, and too grateful to let it go unrewarded; I put into his hands a letter I had that day received from Julia, fraught with the happiest intelligence. Miss Cary was fast recovering, and in three days I was bid to expect them.

I next treated my obliging guest with the sight of his nephew, as resting his rosy cheek on the pillow of repose. Vanity at the same time prompted me to draw aside the curtain which divided the two little beds, and make a display of our own hidden treasure.

Is there a mother in the world who would not have done as I did? However much we may be delighted with the praises and careffes bestowed on the children of our friends; however sincerely we may join in them, nevertheless, it is still more gratifying

fyng when one can produce something of one's own to divide the admiration.

Mr. St. Clear signified his intentions to quit his quarters at the dawn of morning, I therefore, late as the hour was, sent off Lady Ossington's servant, who brought her last dispatches, that very night, with a short prologue, announcing the business of the drama; but not having time to make a history of my own, I treated her Ladyship with the loan of your letter, often repeating the same charge I used to give my little infantine adventurers, before they were able to walk steadily, *Take care!*—to which was added of my letter.

When you read Lady Ossington's account of the interview, you will applaud my foresight, and confess its utility. It was written yesterday, to-day I received it, and to-morrow it will be in your hands.

I am

I am so much got above romantic feelings of all sorts, as to be better satisfied with Julia's description than I should have been to witness the meeting of two lovers, passionate as they are interesting, whose injuries have been so great, whose happiness has arrived so unexpectedly!—These sudden changes from one extreme to another, produces nothing but riot and confusion in one's nervous system!—They are foes to the constitution, and I am glad to have escaped them.

Mr. St. Clear enjoyed no repose under this roof: I foolishly gave into his possession the papers which were destined for India; he neither laid down or took off his cloaths, but passed the whole night in reading them; the next morning I found them on my breakfast-table, sealed and directed; on their envelope it was thus written—

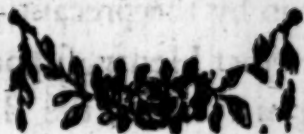
“To

“ To the most generous of women I re-
“ sign these precious contents, till I have
“ her permission to call them my own—I
“ am for ever the debtor of Lady Rosanna
“ York!—I fly to the sister whom her
“ friendship has cherished, and who owes
“ her preservation to that family by whose
“ condescension she is elevated, and whose
“ rank, opposed to their virtues, is but as a
“ spark of fire contending with the Sun.—
“ I would speak of the much-injured, in-
“ nocent Ellen Cary—I would endeavour
“ to express my debt of gratitude on her
“ account, but the sum is incalculable!—
“ Ah! what is it I do *not* owe on *this*
“ score, both to your Ladyship and Lady
“ Ossington!—Julia from this moment is
“ more than ever the sister, the beloved
“ sister of Henry St. Clear.”

I think I may as well make this *billet-doux*
answerable for the conclusion of my letter,
judging

judging it will do very well to say, in the words of St Clear, with very little variation, but in the very spirit of truth, that you are, *if possible*, more than ever the beloved husband of

ROSANNA YORK.



LETTER

LETTER L.

COUNTESS OF OSSINGTON TO LADY ROSANNA YORK.

Inclosed in the preceding.

ALWAYS, my dear sister, are you good, kind, and considerate, but never to greater advantage have you exerted those charming qualities, both of heart and head, than by the precaution you took to inform me that Henry, supposed to have been so long arrived on the distant shores of India, was *indeed* returned, was *indeed* your guest, and would be pressed in the arms of his Julia on the morrow.

Ah! Lady Rosanna, if the thoughts of again beholding a brother, however and deservedly dear to my affections, are capable

pable of inspiring raptures like those I experienced yesterday, on the return of my messenger, tell me to what suffocating emotions I shall be exposed, when I can say to my heart, *Cease to lament the absence of thy Lord, to-morrow he will return!*

I write to you from the hospitable mansion of the Congraves, whither Ellen was removed, with much caution and some difficulty, immediately after I sent off my last dispatches.

I believe we may date the completion of her cure from the moment of her emancipation from the glooms of Swamp Hall to the cottage of Content, and from the sight of an harpy to the society of something more than the common run of human beings—creatures endowed with tender sympathy and rational faculties.

My

My fair patient was sitting with these good people in their neat small parlour, or rather reclining on a day-bed, which they had purchased for the better accommodation of their numerous little offsets; Mr. Congrave read to her, his wife worked by her side, and I had rambled into the garden, when the servant I had sent to you the day preceding returned much before the time I could expect him; it was only eleven o'clock.

“John,” said I, “what is the matter?” taking your letter from him through the rustic thicket in a fright, “is Lady Rofanna well? Are the children well?”

“Yes, my Lady,” quoth John, “her Ladyship and the young Lords are all in good health.”

“Have you travelled all night,” I asked, “that you are here so early?”

“Yes,

"Yes, my Lady," replied John, "I set out just as our clock struck eleven, and should have been here two hours sooner, but my horse lost a shoe, and I was forced to ride four miles after a smith."

Satisfied that no accident had happened, I carried your letter to the chamber allotted for the use of Miss Cary and myself by our kind entertainers, who, to make room for us, had sent away four of their children, by whom the two beds, before our intrusion, had been occupied.

Here, seated on an old-fashioned easy chair, covered with green baize, I broke the seal of your Ladyship's magic epistle, filled with so much electrical matter, that my whole frame partook of the delightful shock!

After having perused it more than once, I began to deliberate how and in what manner

manner I should make a disclosure of its precious contents to the beloved of Henry, without communicating to her debilitated habit certain agitations, which in one moment might undo what to do had taken me up quite two weeks.

Hitherto I had been so extremely cautious of alarming her spirits, as almost to forbear speaking on the subject nearest her heart, having, immediately subsequent to my first presentation at Swamp Hall, drawn from her artless bosom this unqualified confession, that if, as I assured her would certainly be the case, my brother could exculpate himself from having *forgotten* as well as forsaken her, she would, because he had been imposed on by false representations, because he was so nearly allied to me, so dear to my affections, and because she had not yet taught her heart to efface its first impressions, she would for all these *because*s restore him to that place in her esteem which
had

had been forfeited rather to circumstances than lost by premeditated offences.

Without coming to any decided resolution *how* to bring about my grand discovery, I went back to the parlour, where I found her alone, her companions having otherwise disposed of themselves; one was gone to discharge the duties of a good pastor, the other to fulfil the office of a good housewife.

CONTINUATION.

Just as I was going to tell you all my little manœuvres, Henry knocked at my door, to put me in mind that I had forgotten to give Miss Cary the julep cordial, which, by Doctor ——'s orders, she takes at a stated period every morning, and it has done her, to be sure, an infinite deal of service.

VOL. IV.

H

I repeat

I repeat this circumstance not to lengthen my letter, but to make you laugh at the expence of a lover's impetuosity; for had I been the intentional murderer of my patient, her exasperated enamorata could not have more severely rated my barbarity than he did my negligence; all his claims are at last satisfied, and I return to my subject.

But not to spin it out beyond the limits of possibility that it should precede my appearance in person at Colt-Hill without haranguing on my own cleverness, I shall content myself with the credit of having made the communication with so much adroitness, that although my lovely sister elect frequently changed colour, and sometimes shed tears, she neither fainted or was hysterical, of which, on both accounts, I had entertained very uneasy suspicions, her strength being in no condition to contend with such violent assailants.

My

My next business, the first being successfully negociated, was to consult with our benevolent host and hostess how to procure lodging for their expected visitor, supposing it would be quite out of the question that they would be able to supply him with a bed in their own house. I knew it was a long way to the nearest village, perhaps dangerous for a stranger to explore so unfrequented a path in dark evenings; and though probably he would not want this temporary abode longer than three nights, I was as full of fears for his safety as if I had been going to fix his establishment for life in some solitary neighbourhood, inhabited by thieves and surrounded by banditti.

Smiling on each other, Mr. Congrave said to his wife, "Whether her Ladyship's fears are well or ill-founded, it behoves us, my dear to look out for some nearer situation

H 2

than

than the village, where Mr. St. Clear may sleep at ease, if not in splendour."

"Ah! then I was not mistaken," she replied, "the same thought struck us both, and at the same moment—let us about it immediately."

These good people possess great natural politeness, together with inexhaustible philanthropy; they went upon their secret expedition without delivering a tedious prologue of apologies for leaving me alone, but with such animated haste to do me service, that if I had not received a thousand other proofs of their urbanity, this one would have fully established their claims to the distinguished characteristic of kindness.

When all was prepared for my inspection, they returned to conduct me to their

board

board of works, where I found in a room nearly twelve feet square, not only a neat bed, but every comfort that could be desired for a distressed batchelor, even to his night-cap and slippers.

“This,” cried I, with surprize, “my dear friends, is, I know, the chamber occupied by yourselves!—Never can I consent that my brother shall dispossess you of it!”

“There are two reasons,” said Mr. Congrave, “why I shall not deny the fact; I *respect* truth, and will not abuse it; I *honour* your Ladyship’s discernment, and will not contradict it!”

“But, my love,” said his wife, interrupting him with eagerness, “you forget to tell Lady Ossington, that, although this indeed *was* our sleeping-room, we shall not be inconvenienced by resigning it to Mr. St.

Clear, having another not far off, which will serve us equally well."

I begged I might be allowed to judge whether they were likely to lose or gain by an exchange so liberally intended, before I could possibly, in the name of my brother, take possession of the pretty apartment they had so elegantly fitted up for his reception.

"When *Poverty* blushes at her own scantiness," replied this disciple of humility, "she is *self-disgraced*; on the contrary, nobility becomes *self-exalted* when it can greatly stoop to descend to her lowest dwelling, on an errand of benevolence, even by the aid of a ladder, and by no better accommodation can your Ladyship visit our little dormitory.

The mention of a ladder by way of staircase brought to my remembrance how often
I had

I had formerly ascended to the chamber of dear, ancient Margaret by the same conveyance; my ardour revived for the achievement of adventures. I longed to try whose powers of activity were the greater, *Cleopatra* the gipsy, or Julia, the *Gipsy Countess*!—and having prevailed on them to shew me the way to their apartment, I followed, full of curiosity, to find out where this room could be situated, having supposed myself perfectly acquainted with every part of a building, the whole circumference of which would hardly measure with the little Music Room, where perhaps you are now sitting, striking the keys of the harpsichord, to amuse *your* Archer and *my* Dunstenville, one on each knee, with their eyes fixed on your matronly countenance.

My friends conducted me through the house to a diminutive poultry-yard, where stood in one corner a small hovel, that did not appear too good for the residence of the

feathered folk, for whose sanctuary against the weather it seemed to have been erected.

Mr. Congrave stopped before the little building—We did the same. “Well, Madam,” said he, “you now behold the convenient appendage to my *Castle*; will not a view of the external serve, instead of a nearer investigation of its internal grandeur?”

“No,” said I, laughing, “I am so much charmed both with your *Castle* and its appendages, that there is not a corner in either which I do not desire to explore, so pray shew me the ladder; but first tell me, if this is really the situation for which you are to exchange your own comfortable apartment in favour of my brother.”

“I only wish,” he replied, “that the sacrifice was more deserving than it is of your brother’s approbation.”—At the same time

time, taking a key from his pocket, he unlocked a door, which gave me a sight of the under chamber, well filled with apples, potatoes, and onions, all very nicely laid out on clean straw.

I looked round me for the ladder; Mrs. Congrave thought it was in admiration, and exultingly assured me that the building had been exclusively the work of her husband, except a little assistance which had been given him by the clerk of his parish.

What was before curiosity now became astonishment, not at the wonders of his performances, but that a man of his function, sense, and education, should have been thus overlooked in a country commonly so keen-sighted to merit, so liberal to reward it.

It seemed as if he divined the subject of my thoughts, and desired to dispel an air

of chagrin, which they *must* have spread upon my features; for so deeply was I impressed by the sad reflection of the neglect he had combatted, that unknown to myself, I cried out, *How can it be?*

“Contentment,” said he, “might be called the riches of a man poor in the goods of fortune, as industry is certainly the child of necessity, and by both united, we want neither the real comforts or the moderate enjoyments of a better situation.”

“I am delighted with your ingenuity, but more charmed with your philosophy,” I replied.

“These, Madam,” he returned, “are the genuine consequences, not the efforts of reason. Did your Ladyship ever condescend to read the surprizing adventures of Robinson Crusoe?”

“I have,

“ I have, and with infinite pleasure.”

“ Well, then,” continued he, “ did you not observe, on his first setting out, that he was neither indebted to Nature or education for superior talents to others of his class; yet had Socrates fallen into the same misfortunes, could he have conducted himself with greater wisdom than the unlettered, illiterate traveller ?”

“ No,” cried I, “ he *could* not have done better—he *might* not have done so well.”

He stopped—*I am using too much freedom!*—his manner, not his voice, declared these were his sentiments.

“ This,” said he, pointing to some steps, more shapeless than insecure, “ is the ladder, will your Ladyship venture to ascend it ?”

H 6

I answered

I answered that I should most readily do so, but not till he had finished those observations which had been very prematurely interrupted.

“Prolixity with our equals,” said he, “is often tiresome; with our superiors it is always impertinent to exact more of their attention than it is decent to expect. I have already, Lady Ossington, intruded too much on your condescension.”

“Will you say that, when I have desired you to proceed, and again repeat my request?”

“Your indulgence, Madam,” he replied, “is extremely flattering; in obedience to those commands, I shall take the liberty of drawing a short parallel case, as I at first intended, between a poor curate and the shipwrecked mariner. If the one
is

is cast on a desolated island, the other is in a condition no less deplorable; one has only himself to take care of, the other has a wife and family to provide for. If the earth is sterile, and will not yield forth her fruits of encrease to the sea-drenched mariner, still he is at least as well off as he who has no earth of his own to cultivate; the only difference then in their situation must belong to the endearments of a domestic circle; there the advantage is all our own, but in respect to any other society, the balance again becomes nearly our own; the man who cannot afford to live in society is but one remove from that necessity which compels the wanderer through uninhabited regions to live out of it; but the nearest alliance of all between those unfortunates is, that the bane of their happiness is the beginning of their comforts; from affluence they may have been reduced to starvation; from necessity they learn the art of living,
and

and industry elevates them beyond the horrors of desperation."

Such a look of contentment spread itself over his weather-proof countenance, and an air of so much pleasantry accompanied his expressions, that I could not help exclaiming, "Your persuasive oratory *must* not always be confined to its present sphere, it should disseminate through our churches, and enlighten the knowledge of Princes!"

On recollection, though I only spoke as I felt, there appeared something hyperbolic in my compliment, so very unlike his own unassuming pretensions, that a little ashamed of the comparison, I did not wait for a reply, but holding out my hand, told him I was now ready to ascend.

The chamber above was better by some degrees than that below, yet after all had
nothing

nothing to boast of but its cleanliness, the walls being white, and the bed without curtains. I objected to their removal hither, assuring them that my brother would think himself well off to be indulged with a lodging so much better calculated for one person than two people; but to this proposition meeting with nothing like submission, I was at last obliged myself to submit; they informed me, at the same time, that their son, who had left Miss Cary's packet at my door, always, when he came from College, used this spare room to study and sleep in—"Therefore," added the tender mother, "your Ladyship may suppose it can be no matter of regret for his father and me to repose our heads on the same pillow where that of a beloved son has so often rested."

All the time which I had been devoting to these worthy creatures was by Ellen dedicated

licated to the purposes of restoration, violent conflicts whether of pain or pleasure require to be treated with the same lullaby soothing, as when we hush upon our bosoms the infant diseased or froward. I had laid her on the day-bed, covered her with my own thick cloak, lined with skin, and when I came back to the parlour, found her fallen into the sweetest sleep imaginable.

I entered on my tiptoes, for fear of awakening her, there being no such luxuries as carpets beneath the humble roof of my dear old curate, and taking out your letter, read it over for the sixth time, first placing myself at a window commanding the lane by which Henry must pass, comparing your suppositions about the hour when I might expect him, with my own ungovernable impatience for the event of his arrival.

Lady

Lady Rosanna, said I to myself, supposes he will be with us by six; it is now hardly three o'clock—What an age to hang on the tenter-hooks of expectation!—I took up my work-bag to divert the moments, and make them fly faster—It would not do—a blind man might have guided a needle quite as well as I could do; my eyes were always directed to the lane, never to what I was about.

The rattling of a distant carriage roused all that was irritable in my composition; the sound nearer, I could no longer manage myself, how then could I take care of another?—If unable to govern my own motions, was I a proper guardian to watch over the repose of my sleeping patient?—The sylph-like step with which I gently pressed the floor at my entrance yielded to a movement noisy as it was rapid; my cloaths touched Ellen as I rushed by her couch; without stopping to enquire what mischief

mischief might have happened by my negligence, I had opened the door, when the voice of Miss Cary, tremulously calling after me, stopped my speed in its progress.

“Where am I?” she cried. “What is the matter?—For God’s sake, tell me what is the matter!”

“Nothing, my love, is the matter,” I replied, turning back.

“Oh! Lady Offington, is it you?—I thought Mrs. Sharp had plunged a dagger into my breast!”

She is always beautiful, but at this moment appeared pre-eminently lovely. Starting from a dream impregnate with horrors, her cheeks glowed celestial red, and the little muslin cap which shaded her face having slid from her head, the finest auburn hair in the world fell over her bosom and shoulders

shoulders in the most charming disorder; one white hand covered her heart, as if to ward off the blow with which she had fancied herself threatened; the other supported her trembling frame as she half raised it from its reclining posture, in which attitude, before I had time to reason her out of her fears, or scarcely to announce the name of Henry, Henry himself, the enraptured Henry, was at the feet of his adored and adorable mistress!

I shall not presume to intrude on your Ladyship my own joys, my own extacies, at this solid re-union to the only relation I have upon earth, that my proud heart does not recoil when forced to acknowledge their affinity!—I call it a solid one, because our *first* accidental meeting was but as a flash of happiness, *this* second encounter makes it the settled inhabitant of my bosom!

No,

No, I will not say one word about my own feelings, I can think only what were those experienced by Henry and his Ellen; yet of those I must *only* think, for to describe them is impossible!—Never was reconciliation more perfect!—Never human felicity more effulgent!

Miss Cary is not to be our guest at Colt-Hill longer than till our hospitable friends have settled their affairs in this odious nook of the creation, which will take up only a few days to arrange, when, at her urgent solicitations they have consented to be her guest at Cary Park, of which place she is to remain the entire mistress, before and after her marriage with Henry, until the return of her father; it is his own decree, which she ardently longs to fulfil, as her two little brothers are left there, on whom she doats with extreme fondness; he has, besides putting her in possession of his house, been liberal.

beral even to profusion, in respect to the fortune he intends for her. He has done every thing without consulting his wife, or it never would have been done at all.

Henry means to be extremely munificent in his acknowledgments to the dear Congraves for their services to his beloved Ellen, without permitting them to feel the weight of an obligation; he has already written to London for five shares of a hundred pounds each, to be bought for every one of the children, in Government annuities, which, if they live, may be extremely beneficial, so much depending on survivorship; and for the good old people he has ordered two thousand pounds to be purchased in the four per cents, of all which the vouchers and securities are hereafter to be sent, without their benefactor's name, to the worthy father of this hitherto ill-portioned family, as the free gift of a person unknown.

My

My brother is in the highest of all possible spirits. Should you and I be summoned to town, he means to occupy Colt-Hill until Miss Cary's health is enough restored, and preliminaries forwarded, to make her the companion of his life; in the mean time, living under the protection of such respectable inmates as the Congraves will remove every shadow of impropriety which might have attached to his assiduities had he visited at the Park, where only herself and servants resided.

The evening after to-morrow we shall receive your welcomes home, as well as your congratulations on our no distant prospect of a wedding. I wish you would have *Master Billy* and *Master Tommy* to meet us at our arrival, it will give Ellen pleasure; you might accommodate them with beds for one night, and the next day we shall send them back; but take care, I beseech you, to keep all offensive weapons from the
clutches

clutches of my fairy pugilist, lest he might be arraigned for his life before he is able to *peak* in his own defence. Your Ladyship cannot have forgotten how very near he was to the act of committing manslaughter upon the body of Master Billy some weeks ago, and in the awful presence of his mother.

Farewel, dearest sister, till Thursday—
On Thursday we meet.



LETTER

LETTER LI.

LADY ROSANNA YORK TO MR. YORK.

PREPARE every thing, my dearest love, in the best possible stile for the reception of your *truant* wife, and for her *seducer*, Lady Offington. Yes, she is determined to follow your advice, and place herself in a more central situation, to await the return of her Lord and Master.

We shall remain here no longer than for the arrival of Miss Cary's new associates, and then set out for town immediately.

When you have diligently brought together all the agreeables in the world to set us in good humour with you and your habitation, you may devote your next leisure

to

to walking up and down through the most capital streets and finest squares, till you have found out some superb mansion for a homely couple of quality, to sit down in and live soberly ; I mean for my brother and Julia, for she will have it so !

This is not all the work I have been cutting out for you : knowing what a man of business you are, how much you hate idleness, and how much you want employment, I am going to honour you with a commission of no unfashionable tendency ; it is only to provide for a clerical gentleman, with whom, from description, I am become desperately enamoured ; so pray attend all the levees, and knock at every great man's door, where a snug benefice, or any cathedral preferment, is likely to be disposed of in favour of unassuming merit, and no man of sixty-four shall out-bid my friend in his pretensions.—Enough of commands, and now I shall descend to entreaties. /

VOL. IV.

I

Pray,

Pray, then, my dearest George, as you are yourself the fondest of parents, judge my heart by your own; and as my first embrace will be yours, let my second, without let or hindrance, be given to our darling boys!—This cannot be done unless you have the indulgence for my impatient wishes to call them home from their respective schools by beat of drum, or any other less noisy summons, to meet me at my first arrival, that I may see all my treasures at one view, and press them all to my bosom in one embrace!

My next, and I hope the only letter I shall have occasion to write, will convey to you the final arrangements for our journey, but do not let that put a stop to the progress of your correspondence with me; for should you fail, and some untoward accident arise to intercept our present intentions, I assure you my company at Colt-Hill, or any other place, except under your
own

own roof, would not be very desirable; in that case, I should be a torment to myself, of course to every other body.

Mr. St. Clear is to attend his sister and me to town; her coach will hold us all; the servants are to follow in mine; the children will be placed on our knees; we shall be more satisfied in our minds, though our bodies may be less at ease, whilst depending on ourselves for their safety, rather than for our own convenience to confide them in charge of our domestics.

Before this you will have guessed the only business that could possibly drag the person of Mr. St. Clear so far from the spot in which his affectionate heart is deposited? His stay with us will be short, not so his desertions from our circles. No, I shall never expect to see him at home; if he is to be enquired for, it must be at the chambers of his lawyers; should they be speedy

and diligent till their work is compleated, he will *live* with them; but if negligent and tardy, he will as certainly *die* with them, for he declares the shortest absence from Miss Cary will be killing him by inches. If such were ever your sentiments, and I had the honour of inspiring them, this sort of lover-like language may be intelligible; but if you never knew, or if you have forgotten it, which is much the same thing, it will then appear quite incomprehensible, why a man should not be able to exist out of the sight of his mistress, who in a few months may see her every day, every hour, and for *ever*!

This Ellen Cary is certainly one of the most fascinating girls within the circle of my female acquaintance, I mean of her own standing; her form and face are beautiful beyond description; her heart is composed of tenderness; her temper attuned by the very finger of harmony, to which
the

the most lively air and animated spirits have been added since Mr. St. Clear has been able to exculpate himself from the degrading charge of unfaithfulness.

You will have seen by the letter I enclosed to you from Lady Ossington, that she enjoined me to send for the two little Nabobs in miniature, that they may be with me when their sister arrived, of course I did as she desired; and their joy at beholding again this dear sister, which could only be equalled by her own, has given them a sort of interest in my heart, which ill breeding, for, it must be acknowledged, they are a couple of squalling brats, will not be able to efface. The joys and sorrows of grown people may be put on to serve an occasion, but in children there can be no affectation; theirs are the genuine impulses of uncorrupted nature; as such, from the specimens of the love and reverence in which Colonel Cary's daughter is

held by his two infant sons, now that they are left entirely to her management, will, I venture to pronounce, be snatched from the gulph of perdition, which undue indulgences were spreading for their destruction, and, under her sensible direction, become a monument to the praise of her good conduct, a credit to themselves, and an honour to their family.

I am charged with so many messages from so many people, and of such various import, that I am determined, not having room to insert all, to omit all; when we meet together, let every one speak for him or herself, whilst, in the mean time, I bespeak the continuance of your tender indulgences for all the whims, flippancies, and negligences of your happy, faithful, and affectionate

ROSANNA YORK.

LETTER LII.

MR. YORK TO LADY ROSANNA YORK.

I HAVE not heard from you for these three days, dear Rosey, and I wrote to you but yesterday, yet here I am again at my escrutoire, to tell you the news of the moment.

It was rumoured where I supped last night, that the regiment of guards to which your brother is attached had been spoken with at sea by the Lapwing packet, a swift sailer, who had out-run the transport on board which the troops were embarked, preceding them with the intelligence, that if the wind continued in the right quarter, in eight and forty hours they may be expected to land at Portsmouth.

This morning early I went to the Admiralty, either to have these agreeable reports confirmed or contradicted; the former was most fortunately the case, and I am immediately setting out for Portsmouth. I dedicate the few moments my carriage will be getting ready in sending you the happy intelligence. Happiness, in my vocabulary, is a word without meaning, unless you participate with me in its consequences!—However gallant you may think this assertion, it is more true than gallant; you are dearer to me than self to self; you are my better half—How then, whilst one of our minds is darkened by suspense, can the other be illuminated by certainty?

I do not prescribe with what caution it may be necessary to administer the communication I have been making to Lady Offington, because you always do every thing as it ought to be done; nor shall I
have

have occasion to add one spur to the impatience of that dearly beloved sister, who will fly hither on the wings of ardour, when informed that it is the Lord of her heart to whom she flies. Consider thyself, my life in exactly the same predicament, and if there be any swifter wings than those of love, borrow them, to waft thee to the arms of an adoring husband.—Not another word—My chaise is at the door.



LETTER LIII.

LADY ROSANNA YORK TO MISS CARY.

LADY OSSINGTON is so engaged with her own and the happiness of her Lord, Mr. St. Clear occupying himself to hasten the business which brought him to town, that he may the sooner return to his fair enamorata ; and I, only I, am left to gossip with our dear Ellen.

I this morning asked your lover, if in his letters he had given you any account of our journey ?

“ There was no occasion for doing so,” he replied, smiling, “ her image travelled with me.”

“ Did

“ Did you make that your apology ? ”

“ Certainly.”

“ Very well; if she is satisfied, so am I, and no more is to be said on THAT subject. But I suppose you was not quite silent upon the meeting of *your* sister and *my* brother ? ”

“ Ah! Lady Rosanna, how could a heart so disposed as mine dwell on any other raptures than its own ! ”

“ When do you propose going back to Colt-Hill in search of your senses ? ” was my next question ?

“ Within six days,” he replied, “ by which time my affairs will be *en train*; and if I can *patiently* wait any where for their conclusion, it must be in the neighbourhood of Miss Cary.”

“ Then I must write to her those *particular* interesting occurrences she is so anxious to hear, and you have so ungraciously omitted ?”

“ By no means would I give your Ladyship that trouble; I will tell her every thing when we meet.”

“ You will tell her nothing,” said I, in a pet, “ but that *she* is *charming* and that *you* are *charmed*.”

“ No, upon my honour,” he cried; “ I will steal as much leisure from my own feelings as shall make her comprehend what were those exquisite ones experienced by Julia and her Lord at their first rencontre—Are you contented now, Lady Rossanna ?”

“ Perfectly so, that the task of recitation will not devolve on me !—Can you doubt
it,

it, Sir, when you recollect the numberless pages over which I have so lately been travelling in the service of a certain gentleman?—Besides, learn, if you do not already know, that the genius of woman, however active, can ill brook confinement, and only delights in variety.”

He kissed my hand even in presence of my husband and the whole party!—Indeed he did!—and said something very gallant about obligations, gratitude, and so forth. So now, my dear, having resigned *all* my other subjects, I must talk to you of yourself.—Of the Congraves, who, in consequence of our express, have, I conclude, by this time joined you at the Park, and other weighty matters, which you may never know, if I do not relate them, Mr. St. Clear being too little of the egotist to rehearse his own achievements.

I wonder

I wonder how lovers can ever expect credit for their *own* assertions, when they so ungraciously lend their faith to the promises made by their mistresses. For instance, you promised to take care of your health in the absence of your lover, and yet he frets, fumes, and makes himself vastly disagreeable with his unnatural fears that you will neglect it.

So much for the absurdities of an amiable passion, which, however perfect, like all other *perfections*, are not without its shadows and its weaknesses.

In your present rusticated situation, when you cannot discriminate my *obsolete* sentiments through the regions of fashion, where they would draw down on my devoted head nothing less severe than the most pointed ridicule, I dare, even with you to contend, for the priority of wedded
love

love over that romantic fury of the heart, which is for ever pampered by the sweets of expectation.

I do assure you I have not taken a bribe from Mr. St. Clear to declare my sentiments in favour of matrimony, or have I any views of hastening you into that state *before* your time ; it would be supererogation to help on an event already advancing with more than common celerity. No, it is a true sense of my own felicity, without secondary causes, to which you are indebted for my unsolicited opinion.

I am not so illiberal as to suppose there are only *two* good husbands in the world, but maintain, that the very best of the good have fallen to the lot of Lady Offington and myself, and if Henry St. Clear is not the Prince of Hypocrites, there is another of no inferior worth in reserve for Miss Cary.

Amongst

Amongst the thousand indulgences I boast to have received from *my* husband, I acknowledge no obligation with more heart-felt pleasure than his having provided for your *preserver*; and I commission you to tell Mr. Congrave, a very infirm old man, every thing but dead, lies between him and a *fall* in the cathedral of Durham; at the same time assure him of our hearty congratulations; we all rejoice in his good fortune, but none more, if so much, as Lady Offington.

This intelligence will not appear tedious, your gratitude must prevent it from assuming that form, yet I know you wish me to relinquish my present subject for one still more congenial to the predilection of your heart. My tale is a long one, I shall therefore endeavour to shorten it.

CONTINUATION.

My sister Ossington has told you the wonderful history of her life, and you have also seen it exemplified in the manuscript intended for the perusal of your lover in a distant hemisphere; I speak to you then as a pupil of the old school, and not as a novice in the scene of our adventures.

We had been ten days in town after the gentlemen joined us from Portsmouth before any of our party thought of exchanging home pleasures for those which are to be found in foreign circles, when, although our stores of rapture were by no means exhausted, we thought a little relaxation would do them no harm, so agreed to occupy my box at the opera that very night, and to shew ourselves at Lady Semour's ball, for which we had cards of invitation;

her

her assemblies are always extremely brilliant, and I prevailed on Lady Ossington to humour my caprice of seeing her the finest of the fine.

Except her presentation at Court, this might have been called her first exhibition on the theatre of fashion, since she became the wife of my brother; and if he had not united his intreaties with mine, to make it a splendid one, I should never have overcome her reluctance to yield the superiority of her taste to the authoritative dictates of ton.

In the box opposite to our own, sat Sir Peter and Lady Sedly, Sir Robert and Miss St. Clear. The broad stare, the confused air with which they rivetted their malignant eyes on Lady Ossington, and their eagerness in speaking to each other, first drew our attention towards them.

It

It was impossible not to recognize *your* friend Lady Sedly, whom we had seen so lately, and whose every catish feature was impressed on my memory. The others, except poor tame Sir Peter, were totally unknown to our whole party; *your* St. Clear not being yet arrived, none but Lady Offington had ever seen them before, and then but once, when they treated her *cavalièrement*, beyond all the bounds of humanity.

“It *is* Lady Sedly,” whispered I, and darted a look which disturbed, if it did not petrify the whole twittering covey, and made me surmise that they were of the same brood. Lady Sedly alone possessed her usual self-confidence; she had the condescension to honour me with a curtesy, whilst to Lady Offington she kissed her hand, smiling familiarly.

“Who

“ Who is that ? ” said my brother, not having heard the contents of my whisper. “ I hope, Julia, she is not one of your intimates. I never saw so ugly a devil in my life ; wherever *she* comes, there will the face of *sin* enter ! ”

The beautiful bloom on the cheeks of poor Julia had died away at the sight of Lady Sedly, but her Lord’s observation instantly recalled it ; at the same moment the box door opening, *your* Mr. St. Clear made his *entrée*, to the great relief of my sister, who dreaded entering into any explanation in a place so inappropriate to family discussions. The piece went on, and no further questions were asked.

I longed to know if the opposite box had been distinguished by Mr. St. Clear, and watched all his motions, but never once saw his eyes turned that way. When we
went

went out, which was before the dance concluded, we left them as we found them, cuddled up by themselves, evidently in no hurry to depart.

Mr. St. Clear did not go with us to Lady Semour's, and we saw no more of him for that night, but the next morning he joined us at breakfast.

"Julia has been telling me," said my brother, "that some of your family, St. Clear, were at the opera, but she does not believe that you saw them."

"Then she is mistaken, my Lord," he replied, "for as soon as I had assisted the ladies to their carriage I returned back to the house, entered their box, attended them home, supped with them last night, and have had a second meeting with them this morning."

We

We all looked surprized. I expected my brother's face to grow cloudy; for although he was too tender to blame, he was certainly too angry to approve; the reception we gave Lady Sedly at Colt Hill, however she had daringly forced herself upon us; but my expectations were agreeably disappointed when he observed, with great good humour, that he supposed they must have been astonished to meet with him on this side the water.

“Ah! my Lord,” said St. Clear, “astonishment is but a faint expression of what they felt at my appearance! Guilt, horror, and, what I have reason to suppose, remorse, at sight of me had nearly overpowered them!—Permit me to be silent as to the particulars, and to acquaint you only with the event, of our late conferences.”

“As you please, dear St. Clear,” replied Lord Ossington; “if Julia had a thousand
such

such brothers as you, and a thousand such sisters as herself, my heart should proudly acknowledge them all. It is only against pride, avarice and barbarity that it revolts to give up its confidence."

Julia kissed the hand of her Lord—tears started to her eyes—she fixed them on her brother, full of inquisitiveness, but said nothing, as if afraid to interrupt the promised recital of events, at which he had glanced, when requesting to be spared the particulars of what had passed between him, Sir Robert, and the two ladies.

St. Clear drew from his pocket a sealed packet which he gracefully presented to Lord Offington, saying,

"Condescend to take from the hand of that man you honour with your good opinion the penitent lamentation of three miserable offenders, whose vices, though I disdain,

dain, yet to their desire of becoming virtuous I cannot feel indifferent ! Do not refuse, my Lord, to accept this the act of justice that has been tendered to the mother of *your* son by her blind infatuated family.

CONTINUATION.

I, who knew by the turn of my brother's countenance whatever is passing in his mind, found it difficult to decide whether or no he would enter into any sort of negotiation upon the subject of Lady Offington's wrongs. He had till now rejected the offered packet, but now he held out his hand to receive it.

"St. Clear," said he, "I believe that *my* honour and the honour of *my* wife are as sacred to you as your own ! What say you, dearest Julia, shall we fear to leave it in
the

the keeping of this just, this generous brother?"

Julia's cheeks crimsoned with pleasure ; " I am but too happy," she cried, " in submitting to whatever is the will of my Lord ; and next to yourself there is no man in the world so dear to me as Henry : I have no other, I will acknowledge no other brother, except *you* command and *be* advises me to receive Sir Robert St. Clear under that character, for I perceive thus it will end ; and then I shall teach my proud heart a lesson of humility."

" No, sister ; my *only* beloved sister !"
" No," eagerly retorted your lover, " what you call humility, will be your exaltation ! The dispensation of pardon to those by whom we have been injured, is a power delegated by Heaven itself, not more as a reward to the innocent, than for a punishment to the guilty : and that there is not,

cannot be a greater, than to become the objects of forgiveness, where we have deserved no mercy, the few hours I lately passed with Sir Robert and his sisters, have fully convinced me."

"I allow you, Ellen, to be as vain as you please of your conquest." This young man, I think, has but few equals. Whilst he drew tears from our eyes, he chained up our tongues in silence, which nothing interrupted but this single exclamation from my brother :

"Remember, St. Clear, if your oratory cheats us out of our well-founded hatred, our love will only belong to yourself!"

"I have no intention," said he, "either to relinquish the claim you allow me to your esteem, my dear Lord, or to court it in favour of those whose conduct must have forfeited all pretensions to friendship; but
your

your *pity* I ask for that part of my family who, if judged by the heinousness of their deeds, have reason to expect nothing but contempt where they solicit compassion !”

It is impossible to describe the energetic pleader—I must let that alone; or rather leave it for your own delineation. However partial as a painter, love may be, on this subject, he will find no room for partiality.

Could the weakness of men’s foresight anticipate the disgrace which they eventually bring upon themselves, by leaning for support on the crutches of *arrogance*, rather than stand upright on the strong legs of Christian virtue, amongst which there is none greater than *humility*, I am convinced that, merely on the score of *self-love*, the original sin of pride would be intirely rooted from the minds of the proudest !

I am led to make this observation, by the abject confessions which were contained in the speech delivered by Mr. St. Clear to my brother.—The last speech of a malefactor under the gallows, could not be more explanatory of the crimes for which he was about to suffer, than was this *fraternal trio* in the acknowledgment of theirs; and never did the wretch, whose execution is delayed by royal clemency, send forth more pity-moving cries for mercy than were dictated by the pens of those *fallen* ones, praying to be received by their once rejected sister!

“I wonder,” said I to St. Clear, “how you could bring them to make all these humiliating confessions?”

“Because,” said he, smiling, “in the character of their mediator, I was not to be satisfied with any less sacrifice to truth, than the unqualified confession of their delinquency

linquence against its awful dictates ; neither on any other terms would I have pardoned the particular injuries I myself have received from their machinations in the person of my darling sister."

" I should much have liked," added I, " to have heard the arguments you advanced to have brought about this prodigious change so rapidly."

" Had you done so," he continued, " the means by which victory was obtained, might still remain doubtful.—I dare swear it was not so much owing to my unvarnished arguments, calculated to persuade them it was less degrading to confess than persist in our errors, as to the ambition of having their consanguinity to the Countess of *Lord Ossington*, firmly established."

K 3

But

“ But surely, could the restitution of her fortune——”

He interpreted my meaning, and rescued my delicacy, which suddenly revolted from the question I had began to propose.

“ No !” said he, “ *there* I found still less difficulty ! The sacrifice of pride was infinitely greater than the sacrifice of property—Having declared that they knew Julia to be their sister from the moment she appeared at Fair Lawn, by what right could they withhold from her possession the bequest of her parents ? Not so in respect to the accumulated interest, by which the principal has nearly doubled before they came to their senses ; then they exerted no mean powers of contention—the word *refund* sounded so much less palatable than *restore*, that whilst ambition made them

swallow

swallow the one, avarice opposed the other so vehemently, that I was forced to crave its passage, by the solemn renunciation in Lady Ossington's name and my own, of all future connection with any part of our family, or to hold converse with them, except in a Court of Judicature, whither I would summon them to answer for their unnatural conduct."

"You have," said I, "a method of your own, for bringing the most hardened to conviction."

"I had justice on my side," he replied; "and justice is the best second in a good cause; it speaks in the tongue of men and angels; without it I should have done nothing!"

"St. Clear!" said my brother, who, whilst we were talking together, had sat down at a table with the papers spread be-

fore him, Julia seated by his side, with one of her hands enclosed in his, the other applied to wipe away the tear of pity which occasionally strayed down her cheek, for the humiliation of those so nearly allied to her by blood. "St. Clear," said Lord Offington, "what price am I expected to pay for this ample recognition of my wife's pretensions to the honours of your family? What concessions must I make for this entire restitution of all my wife's property?"

"No price! No concessions! my Lord, are due from *you* to them! If you pardon, it must be your own *voluntary* deed. If, as they deserve, you pursue them with your displeasure, neither themselves, the world, nor your conscience, dare accuse you of acting with unwarrantable severity!"

"You have not, then, *absolutely*, and without *reservation*," continued my brother,
"engaged

"engaged that I shall meet those people half way on the road of reconciliation?"

"Heaven forbid!" exclaimed St. Clear.

"Neither with or without reservation have I made either promise or engagement in the name of your Lordship—I promised only for myself, that, on certain conditions, I would not entirely disown them—but went no farther upon my honour!"

"Forgive me, dear St. Clear," cried Lord Offington, taking hold of his hands, "my pretended doubts must have offended the exquisite delicacy which marks every feature in your character! I have only sported with your feelings, that having experienced your clemency, I may know how to dispense it to others."—He then snatched up a pen, with all the eagerness of benevolence, and wrote to this purpose—

CONTINUATION.

“If Sir Robert St. Clear should be disengaged to-morrow, between the hours of twelve and one, Lord Offington will do himself the pleasure of calling in Portman-square.”

“Will this do, my love?” carrying it to Julia; “I have used no name but my own, *your’s* may be added hereafter, if they should deserve the distinction.”

Lady Offington’s eyes sparkled with joy as she spoke her approbation mingled with the tenderest acknowledgments. She has *felt* her injuries like a woman, but she has *forgiven* them like an angel. Your lover was equally delighted—the note was dispatched, and we were all something *more* than contented.

I ought

I ought here to close the scene, as your noble St. Clear is no longer the hero of it, and will only come in for his share with other actors; but not less to gratify you than myself, I shall not immediately let fall the curtain, at least, not till I have brought all my characters upon the stage.

The messenger who carried my brother's billet to Sir Robert St. Clear, stayed so long on his errand, that our heads began to be filled with conjecture—at length he arrived, and delivered his credentials—a handsomely folded letter, where no wax had been spared to receive the impression of family arms, which, for size, might have vied with those used officially in state offices.

Lord Offington drew out his watch, “pray, Arthur,” said he, “have you been detained two hours and a half whilst this letter was writing? Just so long have you

K 6

taken

taken in going less than a mile and coming back again, besides, did I tell you to wait for an answer?"

The man hesitated—"No, my Lord—Yes, my Lord—Indeed, it was not my fault, my Lord—They first begged me to stay a moment, and then kept me two hours; for in the confusion they would not let me come away, if it was ever so."

"What confusion?" said my brother.

"I don't exactly know, my Lord, what it was about, but the house was all in an uproar after I had sent up your Lordship's letter; the servants were running here and there, up and down, with water and drops; I could get nothing out of them, but that their master and sisters had quarrelled, and one of them was faint, but that, they said, was no great matter, because they seldom agreed; but if I would stop till it was over
it

it would save them a good chiding, for letting me go without an answer; and so, my Lord—

“You have said enough—retire.”—He broke the magnificent seal, and took from the highly scented envelope the lines which follow :

“Sir Robert St. Clear presents his respectful compliments to Lord Offington; he shall be at home to-morrow at the time specified by his Lordship, and proud to receive his commands. Lady Sedly and Miss St. Clear send kind compliments to their sister, Lady Offington, whom they hope to see soon in Portman Square. Sir Robert St. Clear also desires his respects may be made acceptable to her Ladyship.”

I shall not lengthen my letter with unnecessary comments, but rather pass on to the business of the drama.

My

My brother's visit the next morning did not serve to exalt the St. Clears in his estimation ; the abject submission of guilt is no more related to the humility of an upright mind, than are the vices of *this* brother and *these* sisters, to the virtues of *my* Julia and *your* Henry. Whatever were Lord Ossington's sentiments, he disclosed them only to me.

Every thing since has gone on in a natural way ; morning calls were first made, and returned ; family dinners followed ; next succeeded their appearance together at all the public places ; and last of all, though it should have first been mentioned, Lady Ossington had appeared with them at St. James's : now that she is no longer afraid of displeasing her Lord by bestowing her affections where they had once been forfeited, she evinces the fullness of her gracious pardon for all past cruelties, by heaping on them favours of every description.

tion. Thus have ended all family animosities on our sides ; I dare not say so much for our precious sisters ; as long as envy, malice, and themselves shall be in existence, no circumstances can separate, except in shadow, such old acquaintances and dear comrades, whilst they bow their necks to Lady Offington ; their eyes say *we have worked in the vineyards of sin to no purpose ; Julia, you have reaped our profitable harvest, and we shall hate you for ever.*

Mr. St. Clear comes to tell me that he shall see you in ninety-eight hours ; lovers never count by days ! I only wonder he had not enumerated by minutes instead of hours, but he was too full of joy for so tedious a computation ! This is the time of year when lawyers give themselves a holiday, but one more industrious than the rest he takes with him to Colt-Hill, that the business of settlements may be going on under his impatient eye ; these plans have
been

been all arranged since the receipt of your letter this morning, in which you tell us you are moved to the Park, and that the Congraves have joined you there, otherwise his delicate sense of propriety would have prevented him from intruding on your retirement.

Make haste dearest Ellen to get well, that you may become one of *us*, for this galloping in and out is prodigiously harrassing to family circles! I shall trouble Mr. St. Clear with my letter, you would not get it sooner were I to send it by the mail; Cupid, though blind, cannot, I believe, be distanced by any mortal post-boy, however keen-sighted, adieu! My brother is desirous to salute you as the sister of his Julia; he will scarcely listen to our praises. "Is she not," he says, "the choice of St. Clear!"—As if for that one reason he would think you amiable, although all the rest of the world were to call you a savage!

Once

Once more adieu! I have a whole cargo of love delivered in by Lady Offington, which she desires me to find a place for, with that you will do me the favour to receive, from your faithful and affectionate friend,

ROSANNA YORK.



LETTER

LETTER LIV.

COUNTESS OF OSSINGTON TO HENRY ST.
CLEAR.

YOU left us, dear Henry, tranquilly happy! Could you behold us at the present moment, you would find us still happy, not tranquilly, but ecstatically happy!

Oh! what a destroyer of the human frame, as well as human faculties, is the fruition of events which we have not only contemplated merely as *improbable*, but absolutely *impossible*! Joy arising out of *improbabilities*, how *lame*, how supportable, when compared to the soul's emotions when the bar of seeming impossibility miraculously falls to the ground; when we once
more

more see that very happiness within our reach, so long lamented as having passed from us for ever !

Do not suppose me quite distracted, I am *less* so than either my dear Lord, or Lady Rosanna, yes, I am rather better collected than either of them ! *My* fingers are more steady than *theirs* ! I can guide a pen, *they* cannot ! I can throw my thoughts upon paper, *they* possess nothing like thought ! Their senses are intoxicated, their powers of thinking smothered in a blissful delirium ! What then can be more certain, than that these sudden irruptions of transport are unfriendly to the mental as well as the bodily strength of poor fragile humanity ?

Content thou thyself, oh woman ! in thine *own* fortitude, whose very strength is weakness ! Witness palpitating heart—witness trembling hand—witness ye tears of ecstacy,

ecstasy, which even now fall upon my paper! Yes, they will all bear testimony against me, that however *I* may *talk* of what I am *able* to do, I *can* do nothing! I am the victim of mine own emotions! perhaps, in a lesser degree than either my husband or my sister, yet still I *am* their victim!

I will philosophize, said I to myself, when I first took up my pen, for if I once give way to my feelings, they will betray me from the straight path of common sense, into the crooked one of incoherence. Well then, I began like a philosopher, but I must break off like a fool. For, instead of knowing what I am about, those interesting beings I left together in the library when I came hither to write my letter, are the only objects by which my ideas are occupied. What are they *now* saying to each other? Something no doubt which I have not yet heard! How strange, that happiness, which feeds even to pampering, on its own luxuries,

vies, should be longing to sit down at the table of curiosity! Yet so it is, and I shall not be rational until I have taken one more peep at the dear group, renewed my congratulations, and received the renewal of theirs.

CONTINUATION.

Yesterday I was a truant—to-day I re-assume the habit of industry—yesterday I was too happy to be wise—to-day I am exactly happy enough to draw up the curtain that has hitherto concealed an adorable mystery, the revelation of which, was only wanting to compleat my blessedness!

The evening before last, one of those many sober ones which we think it no sin to steal from frivolous amusement for the enrichment of our own selfish pleasures, a letter was delivered to Lord Ossington, the
size

size of which engaged my attention, as well as that of Lady Rosanna; and we both exclaimed, "What a packet!"—"Yes," replied he smiling, "directed too in a female hand! Some officer's widow, I dare say, encloses her memorial; if so, it shall not want a passport to the throne.—No!" said he at a glance, "No!" and in silence proceeded to examine the contents, but under such evident marks of great but joyful agitation, that our eyes involuntarily followed all his motions. Before he could have read one third of the first page, standing on his legs, and seeming to forget that he was not alone, he exclaimed, as he thrust the papers into his pocket—"Great God! can this be possible!"

Without being shocked, because the whole of his countenance was illumined by the sunshine of more than mortal animation, we became clamorous in our enquiries, to which he only replied—"Have patience

patience till to-morrow ; dearest creatures, have patience till to-morrow ; I will then see you again ; till then I shall see you no more ! You have nothing to fear, I go to meet a friend whom I never, no, never expected to see on this side of eternity ! Joy like mine is at enmity with repose ! go to bed, sleep and dream, that to-morrow I shall make you sharers in my felicity !” With these words he snatched up his hat and precipitately ran out of the room, repeating every step—“ Great God ! can it be possible !”

We anxiously talked over these circumstances till the return of Mr. York, who, on hearing the communications we eagerly pressed to make him, strengthened the advice of my husband, by uniting his own to the same effect ; and at half an hour after midnight we retired to our chambers, but for my part without knowing on what to
fix

fix my thoughts ; I did not close my eyes to sleep during the whole night.

When I met Lady Rosanna in the morning, I could read in her face that she had been as restless as myself. So down we sat to breakfast, and again fell to conjecturing, with as little success as on the preceding evening ; when suddenly the door was thrown open ; nobody was announced ; and expecting to see my Lord make his appearance, we started up to meet him, with so much more haste than conduct, that between us we overset the tea-table, and the violent crash of broken porcelain, for a moment suspended the rapidity of our motion, and the very next, we found ourselves embraced in the arms of two girls, beautiful as the fabled *houries* of Mahomet ! They were the daughters of Lady Hastings ; and as we returned their caresses, a sort of light flashed upon our senses, which made us
both

both cry out at the same time, *Have you seen Lord Offington?*

"Yes, he is even now at the hotel with our mother."

"Then, no doubt," cried I, a little chagrined, "that nothing more novel, or extraordinary, than the arrival of these good people, should have occasioned us so much perplexity; then, I suppose the letter which sent off my Lord in so great haste last night, came from Lady Hastings?"

"Your Ladyship," replied Lady Jane, "has guessed the truth; they will be here in a few minutes, but have sent us to entertain you with our histories before they come."

I saw Lady Rosanna partook of my disappointment. Yet we were both so truly rejoiced to see these charming girls, to see

them so much improved, to see them so gay, so happy, so affectionate, that they could have had no cause to find fault with the reception we gave them ; perhaps the more endearing, the more tender, from the recollection of those expressions concerning them, which fell from the lips of our dear expiring father.

Seating them between us, holding a hand of each in our own, we were beginning to ask them a thousand questions ; when, sily withdrawing them from our hold, and removing their gloves from their arms, which would disparage the falling snow for whiteness, their eyes directed our observation to a plain gold ring, on a certain finger of each, the meaning of which insignia, if you do not know it, it is time you should begin to learn, as soon, very soon, I hope you will have occasion to place just such another on the finger of our very much beloved Ellen.

“ You

“You are married, then, my dear young friends,” I cried with vivacity.

“Both married!” said Lady Rosanna, equally astonished, “yet neither of you give us one announcing line to call for our congratulations!”

“Did I not tell you,” replied Lady Elizabeth; “that we were come to relate our histories? And when you have heard them, the reserve of which you have the goodness to complain, will be tolerably well accounted for.”

“Do you begin, sister,” said Lady Jane.

“Yes, I shall do so,” she replied, “in very few words, that your romance may not be interrupted, except by the arrival of our expected friends from the hotel.”

"It is no more than *this*—I met with Sir Allen Osborn at the Court of ———, soon after we parted from your Ladyship at Lisbon, who, like another Cæsar, came but to look and conquer. My heart surrendered to his summons—he demanded that my hand should be the hostage of its faith—I consented to my own captivity, and have never repented my ratification of the treaty.—Now Jane!"

The *now Jane*! spoke a volume of impatience, and impressed the face of her sister with a variety of expressions—she seemed all over agitated—she even drew her breath with difficulty, and asked for a glass of water.

"Let it stand by me," said she, "I shall, perhaps, want to damp my throat more than once, in the course of an history which, though long, will be less tedious

dious than interesting, *to all whom it may concern.*"

The gaiety of tone in which she uttered the last part of the sentence, made me believe that her former embarrassment had proceeded from no other cause than timidity, on which we rallied her, declaring our eagerness to hear the adventures of so charming an heroine?

During the whole of Lady Jane's recital, you must not expect merely that I shall once break the thread of her astonishing narrative, either by exclamations from myself or Lady Rosanna. You are possessed of penetration—you will be at no loss to discover every thing—and you have sympathy which will tell your heart what must have been the emotions of ours—beginning with doubt—growing into hope—improving to certainty—ending in ecstasy almost to suffocation!—

L 3

Having

Having premised that I am to make no repetition of sensibility's *frolicks*, or nature's *effusions*—Now listen to the sweet enchantress, who, by little and little, unfolded the thick woven web of contrivance, wherein were concealed the ultimatum of our felicity.

"You know," said Lady Jane, smiling on me, and pressing the hand of my sister close to her heart, "how many years we have resided with my mother in foreign countries; I can but just remember the death of my father; which event, our departure from Britain immediately followed, because prudence advised that it should be so; and our affectionate mother never rejected her counsel.

"I shall not trouble you with a systematical enumeration of our infantine amusements or acquirements, the one was appropriate

propriate to *our* wishes, the other to those of our tender parent.

“ Elizabeth was thirteen, tall, and well-grown; I one year younger, but, in figure, at least five years behind her; when our mother, who treated us with as much confidence as if we had arrived at the age of women, one day shewed us, in part, the contents of a letter, which, she said, came from a friend extremely dear to our deceased father, and infinitely respected by herself. The name of this friend she concealed from us, as I shall also do from you—I mean for the present—but the purport of this letter, as well as the request it contained, were both so marvelously singular, that my history would be nothing without them.

“ In the first instance he represented, that, having no children of his own, he had adopted for his general heirs, the two

sons of his only brother. That most unfortunately for these young men, they both loved the same beautiful object, who alone was sensible to the merits of the elder. He, though warned of his good fortune, from affection for the younger, triumphed over every selfish gratification, and rashly bound himself by an oath, never to accept the disputed prize, with a brother so dear, as long as they both should live.

“Under this cruel predicament, my mother’s friend complained, that he should have seen no probability of a regular succession to the honours of his family, from the strength of that invincible attachment which would for ever prevent either of them from forming any as lasting connection; there being not such another woman in the universe as the one so nobly renounced by both from fraternal considerations.

“Never,

“Never, he said, should he have seen the olive branches flourish round their table, if the generosity of one nephew had not equalled the sacrifice made from the same motive by the other, that the youngest had proposed to himself and his parents, as the only certain remedy to baffle the disorder, his unfortunate predilection had introduced to, and spread through every part of his family, that he should be permitted for a season to withdraw from their arms, under pretence of visiting foreign countries in pursuit of improvement; that after a certain time false accounts should be sent over of his death; meanwhile, assuming a feigned name, he would seclude himself in the Netherlands, where it was unlikely his plans should be frustrated by any premature discovery, before the marriage of his brother should be accomplished, and he had ceased to consider in his *wife* the object of his *own* idolatry.

“My

“ My mother’s friend exulted in this arrangement, declaring it the only method which could have restored himself and family to their accustomed happiness.

“ My mother’s friend followed this extraordinary communication with a request quite as singular, for, having mentioned where his nephew meant to reside, he besought her, in terms the most urgent and pathetic, that she would make it also the place of her residence ; he said, that besides wishing the self-banished young man might experience the comforts of her patronage, a reason of itself sufficient to render him ardently anxious to obtain it for him, he had yet even stronger motives ; and his views for the happiness of his nephew were still much more extensive, delicately glancing at her daughters for removing certain prejudices, and forming future establishments. Ah ! what an arduous undertaking did this appear to my mother,

mother, for the first two years we lived in the neighbourhood of Mr. Marchmont, the only name by which the stranger was known even to ourselves, who were also entirely shut out from the knowledge of what romantic expedient his uncle had been pleased to build on our personal charms, which his desire to draw the poor soul out of one entanglement, only to plunge him in another, had made him extremely over-rate.

“ We will say nothing of that deep complexioned gloom in which our unfortunate lover wraped himself, as in a mantle; but proceed to tell you how, when his freezing indifference began to thaw, he was glad to lay it aside.

“ No symptoms of this change in the climate of his heart, had taken place; when, by a letter from his father, with whom my mother corresponded since the
decease

decease of her *first* friend, we were summoned to give him the meeting at another place, far distant from that in which we had hitherto resided.

“ On this excursion Mr. Marchmont was our companion, but did not shew himself to any one of the party, except his father, with whom he had privately, frequent and tender interviews; but his wounds were not yet enough healed to trust himself with the sight of his mistress, who was not yet the wife of his brother, and for whose health the voyage had been undertaken.”

Here Lady Jane paused—I shall do the same, to give you a moment's time for recollection.

“ We returned no more,” continued our sweet narratress, “ to the Netherlands, but went about visiting several of the European.

ropean Courts; and through the whole of our tour, were still accompanied by Mr. Marchmont; who, having at length recovered from his first disappointment in the *belle passion*, as well as from the grief which had weighed down his spirits for the loss of a mother he adored, and an uncle whom he loved, began, I don't know how, to cast his eyes upon *me*, as on one from whom he was willing to receive consolation for all his passed troubles.

“My mother,” continued Lady Jane—but before she could proceed in the sentence, whilst tears of uncontrollable rapture fell in torrents over the cheeks of Rosanna and my own; my dear Lord folded me to his heart, and the next moment resigned me to the fraternal arms of the generous, the honourable, the lamented *Charles Danversville!*

For

For the conclusion of this scene I refer to the liveliness of your imagination ; it must be a mind less incumbered with every species of felicity than what are now crowding upon mine ; such alone, can find leisure to compose itself, so as to understand its own language, or before it can hope to be understood by others.

Think Henry, O think, what have been the weight of my troubles, when I not only saw myself an out-cast from my natural friends, but the scourge of that benevolent family, whose compassion adopted the roofless child of misery ; to see them all unhappy, afflicted, separated, and for me ! Oh ! sum up these images to your aid, and by them only will you be able to measure the depth of those emotions which have agitated my heart on seeing the brother of my Lord, rising as it were from the tombs ! Seeing him not only alive, but seeing him happy !

Will

Will you have the goodness to give orders that Colt-Hill may be prepared to receive a large party ; we are all determined to witness your union with your lovely Ellen. By my early mendicant profession, I have imbibed this prejudice, that no journey can be *too* long, provided its termination be profitable, and exactly the same are now my sentiments, whether I subscribe myself as your affectionate sister Julia Offington, or, Julia the Gipsy Countess.

FINIS.

[illegible]